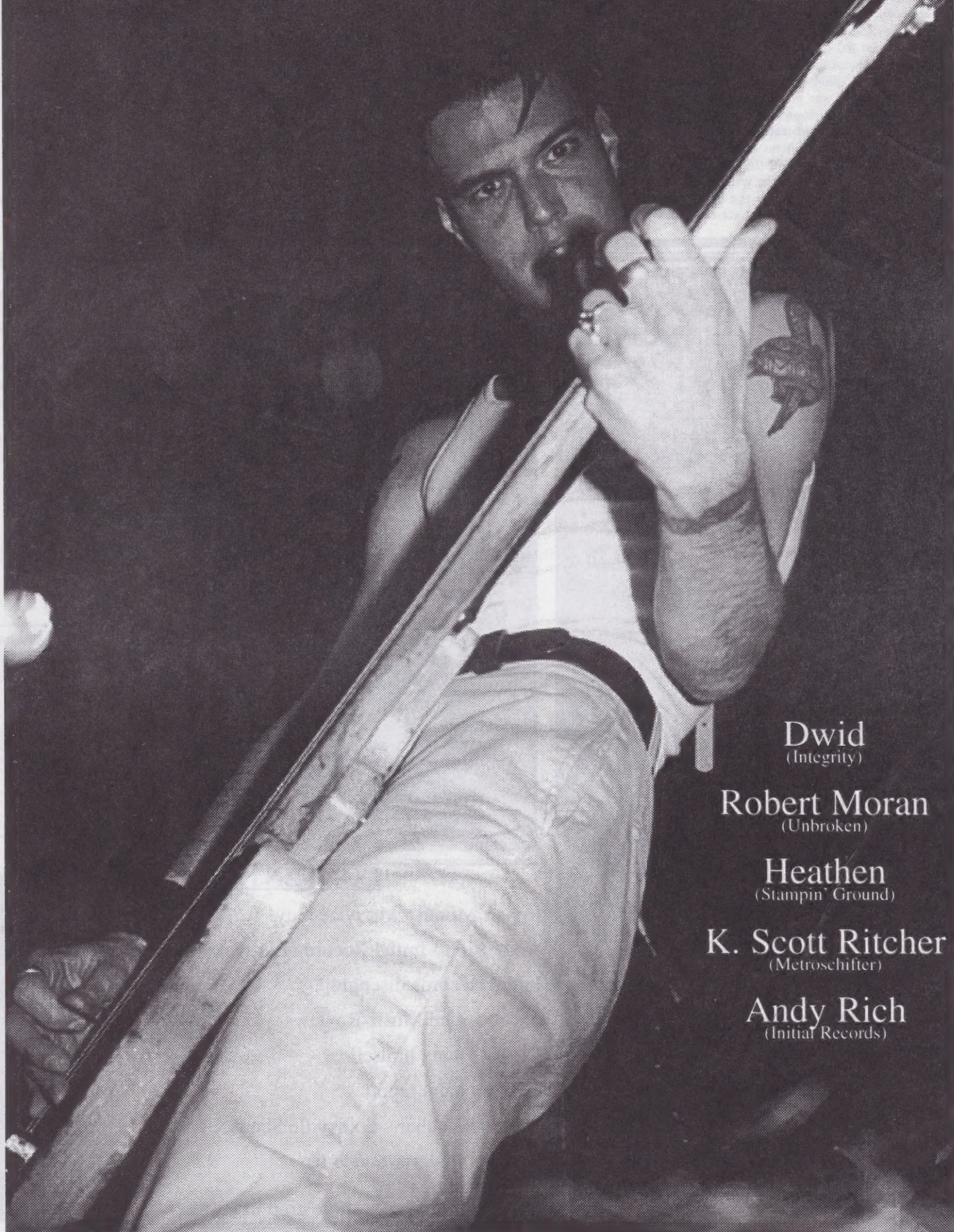


X Insignificant X

Issue 1



Dwid
(Integrity)

Robert Moran
(Unbroken)

Heathen
(Stampin' Ground)

K. Scott Ritcher
(Metroschifter)

Andy Rich
(Initial Records)

The story of how this zine came to be is quite long, and at times unbelievable. Basically, this is the fourth time I have written this thing now, except nobody else has come close to seeing the first three efforts.

I initially intended to put out a zine around August '96, and I have to admit, I got pretty close to that goal. The zine was all written, and I was just waiting for something in the mail before sending it off to print. By the time I got what I was waiting for, the opportunity to print on the cheap had slipped away. Since my aim had originally been only to put out 100 cut and paste zines anyway, I decided that a photocopied first issue would suffice. I decided at this point to change the contents slightly, since there was no rush to get the thing finished. Well, slightly soon became significantly, and before I knew it I had reached the same point again - waiting for crucial items in the mail before the zine could be finished. This time the mail took longer to arrive, and during the waiting period I was rereading what I had written and not liking it very much. Around the same time I got the chance

X Insignificant X - issue 1

to do the Integrity interview, so I decided to wait for that before continuing. Suddenly the whole thing was beginning to take off in my mind, the possibilities were growing, and I knew I could do so much better than what I had done. Overnight I made the decision to take the zine to the next level and make 500. I also got the opportunity to use an Apple Mac to do the layouts. In a very short space of time my aims changed, and the zine just had to change too. I knew that part of the problem was myself. I came to the conclusion that unless I stopped being so self-critical then the zine would never reach the level I wanted it to, so I decided to just get on with it page by page until I got to the point where I was happy enough to let others read it. I then got within one or two hours of finishing completely when the computer crashed, and I lost the whole thing. Nearly three months work lost in a few seconds, all 32 pages completely lost. At this point I was thinking of giving up. Instead my will to do it got stronger, and I saw it as another opportunity to improve.

Anyway, this is 'take 4'. I think that to go from a goal of 100 to actually making 500 zines is a big leap, especially for a first issue. Sure, this ain't perfect, but it is as good as I can do at this stage.

So what have I learned? Well, I learned never to trust anyone to send you anything that is important. I learned to keep back up copies of files on the computer. I learned to never tell people your zine will be 'out soon'. And I learned to never give up, no matter what the odds against you seem to be. Issue 1 was a struggle that I never want to have to face again. At least if it bombs, nobody can say that my heart wasn't in it.

Marcus

PS - I intend to do an issue 2, but I have no intention of giving a date of when you can expect it. Whenever, okay? Don't hassle me.

Credits (where credits due)

Owner, Editor, Layouts - Marcus Andrews
Layout assistance, equipment provider - Mr. Ian Baldwinson
Photographs - Individually credited
Contributing writer - Bine Harm
Printer - Juma
Distribution - The kids
Cover - Arthur of Civ, by me (my best photo ever)
Back cover - Lollipop by Fay

Contributions

The next issue could be so much better than this one if you nice people would have the heart to send in photos and articles. Articles are all welcome, the crazier the better, although I have the right to reject anything that I don't agree with. All photos and articles are guaranteed to be returned real quick.

Reviews and ads

Most ads in this issue were placed free of charge as a means of thankyou or as a gesture of goodwill. This will be the case in the future too, but only for people who are good to me in some way. If any strangers want to place an ad in these pages, I will not charge cash, but I ask that you 'trade' merchandise of some description. I prefer the (colour if possible) vinyl format. However, I reserve the right to reject any ad for whatever reason I like (its MY zine). Everything sent shall receive a mention in the review section too. Oh yeah, nothing sent for review shall be returned.

Issue 2 Plan

Currently there are two possible routes issue 2 could take:

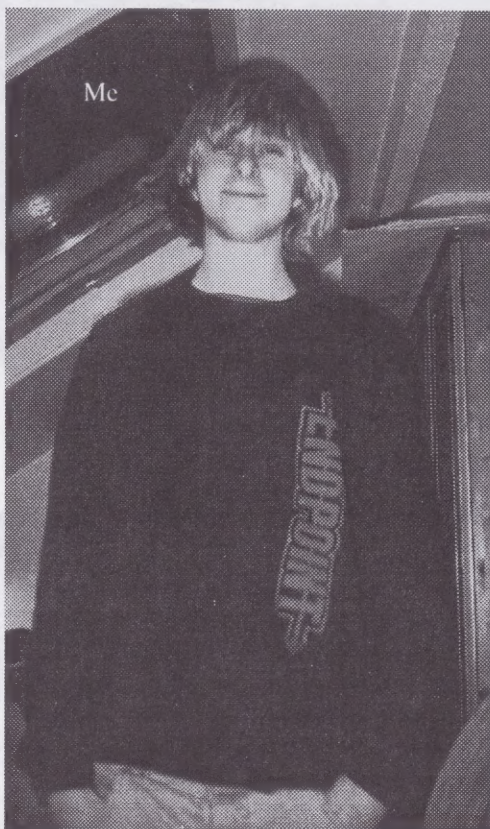
Possibility 1 = California special, although this all depends on whether I end up going to Cali or not in the near future.

Possibility 2 = Ken Olden (guitar hero of Damnation, Battery, Worlds Collide), Richard Corbridge (Armed With Anger records), plus a couple more undecided but interesting scenesters.

Thanks / Hello

Home: Daniel, Fay, Gavin, Richard & Michael, Darren Tadpole, Neil Grice, Bod, Richard Corbridge, Nick Royles, Heath & Sam, Mark Sandwell, Ian Leck.

Away: Andy Rich, Dwid, Joe Beres, Robert Moran, Jordan Cooper, K. Scott Ritcher, Brad Rhetoric, Lenny Dogprint, Florian Heartfirst, Dave Mandel, Ian Selby, Aaron Hydrahead.



Like any hermit, I like to receive mail. Getting out of bed in the morning to find letters or parcels with my name on is what keeps me going through the day. I like mail about anything really, although my real passion is record collecting. I encourage you to write me. All who take the time and care to write are guaranteed a reply.

Marcus Andrews
116 Aylesbeare
Shoeburyness
Southend on sea
Essex
SS3 8AG
ENGLAND

Here is a list of some records and other stuff that I think is good:

Beta Minus Mechanic 7", Cleetus the slack jawed yokel, Disembodied 7", Elliott 7", Endpoint final 10", Falling Forward LP, Farside 'Rochambeau', Ferris Bueller's day off, Gorilla Biscuits LP, Guy Mariano, Integrity, Iron Monkey, Lionel Richie, Mean Season song on Indecision comp LP, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, nollie backside shove its, orange wheels, Pepsi, Second Nature zine, State of the Nation 2nd LP, Sunny Day Real Estate, Tazos, wearing chains as belts, whacking computers with hammers, Withstand 7".

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Plus loads more crap in between!

Extra special thanks to Fay's dad, without who's kindness this zine would look even more amateur than it does already. Sincerely - thankyou very much.

INTRO

insignificant (in-sig-nif-i-kant) *a.* signifying very little; having little importance, use, or value; trifling; contemptible; petty; without meaning. - insignificance, insignificancy *n.* - insignificantly *adv.* - insignificant *a.*

No matter who you are, no matter what you do, you are totally irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. Absolutely nobody on this earth is irreplaceable. Nothing really makes any difference to the world. Especially hardcore. If you step back for a minute and look at the whole hardcore/punk scene as a part of our planet, you will realise how pathetically small it is. How unimportant it is. Put it in context, just for a minute.

Within the hardcore scene, as with any 'community', there are issues (for example, are 'Band X' sell-outs?). To a large number of kids these issues may be very important, and may even be central to their lives for a few days, but the reality of the situation is that these such issues are nothing but trivia for people who have nothing better to concern themselves with. Don't get me wrong, I love to hear and relate all the latest gossip, but what I'm trying to say is that the truth of the situation is that these things don't count for shit.

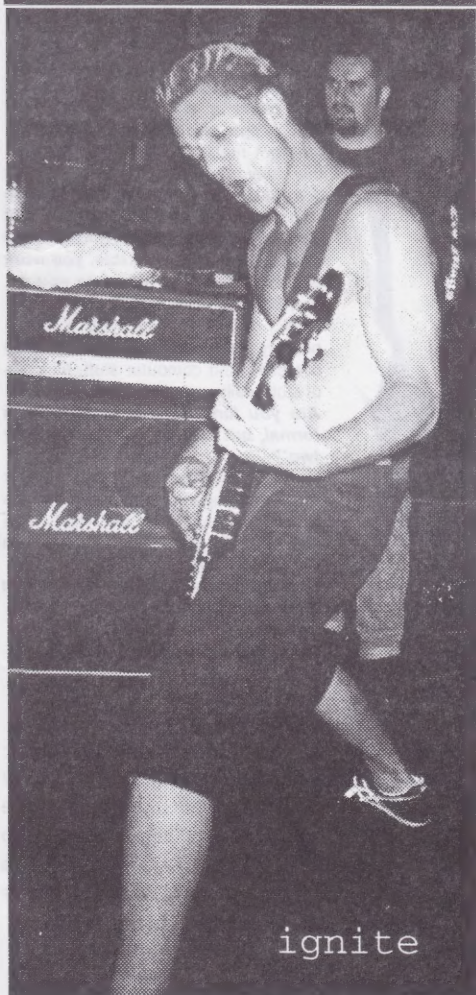
Here's a dumb illustration to get you thinking: You walk along the street and pass a man in a suit. Let's say he's a bank manager. You pass each other, glancing up for only a second. What did each of you see? Well, you probably saw a suit. The face was the same as every other suit's. He probably took you as the epitome of 'average' - nothing he does is exciting or out of the ordinary, you can guess his weekly routine easily enough. You perceive yourself to be in a better position, since you have a greater love of life. You feel somehow

superior. He saw the same. He saw another kid, another worthless layabout. He sees you as inferior just as you saw him. So who's right? Neither.

Feeling superior is wrong. We all do it everyday, but that doesn't mask the fact that it is a form of prejudice. In the above example, both you and the bank manager felt superior because you have both achieved what you feel life to be about. For you that means freedom and fun, for him that means financial success.

I think its weird that people can live in the same town or country yet live in different worlds. For me, the very small world of hardcore takes precedence over most other things, and for a bank manager the world of finance is everything. Nothing he does day to day will have any great bearing on my life, and similarly nothing I do will make any difference to his daily existence.

I guess what I am trying to say is that every person on this planet has different priorities. Each individual lives for their own reasons and causes. Mine is hardcore, yet I can still see how totally insignificant it is to the workings of our world. In the same way, my zine is an insignificant piece of hardcore. The few who read it may indeed find something of interest therein, but I realise that I am not going to change anybody's life in any way. Nor do I want to. My main hope is that I don't cause anybody to get angry, upset, or de-motivated. After all, this is only entertainment - there are far more important things in life to worry about.



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Robert Moran

Have you ever had a parcel of records go missing in the mail? I have. Revelation apparently mailed me the same package three times before I got it, but by the time I got it all the white Texas Lps had sold out. I got pretty distraught, but this guy Robert was always nice to me when I phoned up to find out what was going on. I ended up having many conversations with him before I found out he was in Unbroken. He was really secretive about it, almost as if he didn't want me to know. As soon as I found out I requested an interview, to which he agreed. I decided to mail some questions to him. About 5 months later I had got nothing, so I called him up and asked if I could do it on the phone. The next day we did. So, at last, here it is. My interview with Rob of Unbroken, runner of Crisis records, and the one person that absolutely nobody has a bad word for.

M: Alright, on air.

Rob: Okay.

What do you want to talk about?

I don't know, you tell me, you're doing the interview.

I guess we'd better start off by talking about Unbroken.

Alright.

Okay. Something I've been wanting to know that you never told me, why did it end?

Why did it end?

Yeah.

Erm, well, I don't know. Partly because we were like...we don't think we were gonna be writing any more good songs. The newer songs we were writing got kinda...I thought they were kinda crappie.

(Laughs)

I think the rest of the band kinda thought that way as well, and we just started going off in a whole different musical direction. And it just wasn't really what Unbroken was, y'know. I think we started to lose touch with what kind of music we started out with, so basically we just said "okay, I think its done, we had fun, and its starting to get stale, and we don't like the music that we write." That's like basic, that's one of the reasons. That's probably the main reason, that we just got tired of doing it.

You don't regret it now in any way?

I don't regret breaking up, but I do regret the last show. That went really really bad.

Why?

Just because the sound was so bad, we didn't get to practice. It was just a really really bad show, I thought. There was tonnes of people, and everyone had a good time, but...I don't know. If I could take back one thing it would definitely be that last show. I would've done it on a different day, coz the original plan was gonna be New Year's Eve, when we were gonna do it, but just kinda things happened, so we just ended up doing that show, and it sucked.

So would you...how long were you together?

From...we don't really count being together until Dave got in the band, cos we had another singer, and Steve wasn't in the band. At the time it was just Eric, Todd, and I and this guy Brian singing. And then we got Steve to play second guitar, and then we practiced all the time, and then this other guy just stopped showing up for some reason, so we kicked him out. And we got Dave to get in the band, and that was like February '92 I believe, and that was pretty much when we came out like Unbroken.

So would you describe the time you spent in Unbroken as a fulfilling part of your life thus far?

Without a doubt. I learned so much, I met so many nice people, and I got to see the world, all through just being in a band, it was the best. Being friends with all the guys in the band, its something that I'll never forget.

So how do you move on after that?

What did I do after that?

No, how did you get on with your life?

It was weird. For the first month I was kinda happy, like "Good, I don't have to tour anymore." I was happy, and then I started to miss it. But since I work here at Rev, its definitely taking over my life, and I don't really think about being in the band anymore.

So you've no plans to be in any more bands?

I'm in one now.

Really?

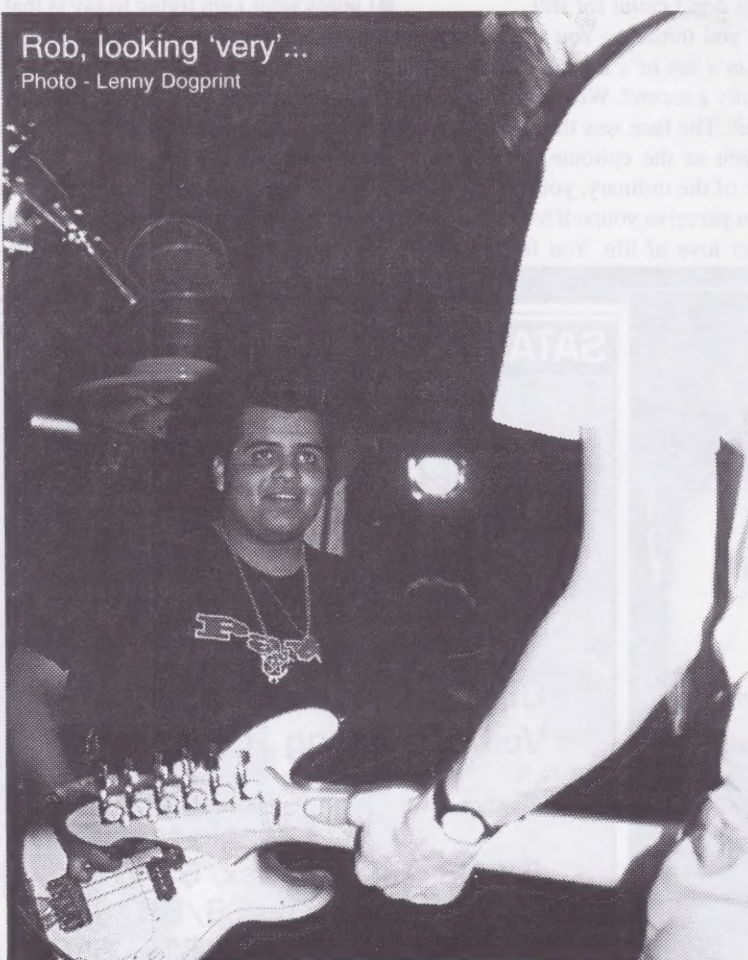
Yeah.

Name?

Erm, not yet. We don't have a name yet, we've only

Rob, looking 'very'...

Photo - Lenny Dogprint



practiced once, that was last week.

Is there anyone else in it I might have heard of?

No, just some guys, some friends of mine.

What sort of style are you playing?

Hardcore. Whole hardcore stuff

Say no more.

(Laughs)

And the Kill Holiday episode. How come you were in that briefly?

Can you hold on for a second?

Sure.

Hello?

Yeah.

Okay, I mean, it was kinda weird, y'know, its kinda like a

lot of personal stuff. We decided to do this band, Steve and I and Barry. Well, me and Barry wanted to start a band anyway, and then Steve happened to be in the car when we were talking about it, and he was like "I could play guitar," and we were like "Okay, sure, let's try it out." Then we said that when everyone gets back from Europe we'll start working on the band, and this was kinda how it happened. I was only in the band from like March to August, and I basically quit and got kicked out at the same time.

What?

What happened was, I was really unhappy in the band and, I don't know, I couldn't stand the music.

(Laughs) Nice thing to say!

I didn't like playing non-hardcore stuff.

Why?

It just felt weird. At first I was kind of excited about it, I thought it was really cool, then after a while I hated it. In '95 I was like "I think I'm gonna quit," and I was gonna quit, but then I was like "I'll stick it out," and then in August when we went on tour with Unbroken, and Steve, for some reason, was just causing a lot of attitude and stuff like that. I thought "I'll do this, then when I get back, I'm quitting." I tried calling Steve and Barry the day I was gonna quit, and none of them were home, so I tried calling the other guitar player Oscar, and he was home, so I'm "Hey, I'm not bringing my equipment tonight, I'm quitting." And he goes "well that's kinda funny coz we were gonna kick you out anyway." And we just kinda laughed about it, and it was like "okay, see you later." I was so glad when I got out of the band because for some reason I just didn't get along with Steve being in that band. We got along fine in Unbroken, but not in that band. If I wanted to be friends with him, I wanted to leave. Plus, I just wasn't happy with that music at all.

Are you proud of that?

Its okay, I'm really glad I got out when I did, because I thought the song on the comp and the songs on the split CD were horrible. I'm glad I got out. But it was weird, because after that recording they came up with a bunch of whole new songs which were just amazing, they got really good towards the end, then they broke up.

A tragedy. I got a feeling that the tape is running low, so I'm gonna watch it carefully. For anybody that doesn't know who might read this, you work at Revelation now. What do you do, you basically run Crisis, right?

Yeah I do that, I do all kinds of stuff. I help my brother with mailorder, I help do database and computer stuff, all kinds of stuff really.

Are you kind of...this sounds a bit formal, but are you like the 'number two'?

No, not at all. There really is no number two, or manager, or nothin' like that. Its just Jordan, and then everybody else just has their job. John is pretty much like Jordan's right hand man...

Sounds amusing. The term 'right hand man' I mean.

(Laughs)

Well, I'm curious to know why...

[At this point the tape ran out. The machine then began fast-forwarding and rewinding of its own free will. I couldn't figure out how to carry on recording, so we agreed to continue this the next day. What now follows is the next day's conversation]

So what's it like there today?

Its super busy.

Is it ever not sunny in California?

Today its kinda rainy actually.

I'm trying to picture it in my mind. I've spent the whole of the last two days trying to decide if I want to go there or not.

Oh really?

Its really difficult. Its the one place in the world I wanna go, but I just don't like going on planes.

If you listened to Morrissey you'd be ok.

Is that your tip for overcoming fear of flying?

Its just relaxing.

I see. Anyway, I don't know where I got to yesterday, I think I was going to ask you something about Crisis records. I want to know the reason for Crisis being re-vamped.

Oh, well, because basically, it was started by Walter like in '91 I think. Then when Quicksand got big Walter took off and the label fell apart, and that was the same time Revelation started to get big. Jordan didn't have time to look over it coz he was doing Revelation stuff, so he just kinda left it alone. And then, in August of '95, about the time I quit Kill Holiday, I ended up for some reason with Jordan and we started talking that day, we just had an open conversation about stuff. I just brought it up, I go "hey, I heard you were lookin' for someone to run Crisis for you," and he said "yeah I am," and then he was "let me have a word with a couple of people," and like two days later he gave me a call back and told me he wanted me to start. And that's just how it happened.

So I guess you were quite lucky.

Yeah. (laughs)

Maybe I'm being dumb, but I always thought that Crisis was originally a less hardcore sister label, I guess you'd call it.

No, its just that Walter wanted to start a label. The new stuff I'm putting out is intense, heavy, angry hardcore stuff.

(Pause) To be honest, I didn't bother writing down any questions to ask you. I figured we'd have a nice conversation like we normally do. But it seems difficult to have a conversation when you really want to have one.

Yeah.

You can just feel that tape spinning, and...whatever. Let's talk a little about what we were talking about on Monday, all the British stuff that you are into.

Yeah, I trip out because a few people that I...I met only like 4 or 5 people from England and I'm surprised that...Vique kinda explained it to me I guess, coz I was just asking "Do you like Morrissey?", and she said no, and I'm like "how can you not like it?". She was just explaining how its different, coz over in England you get it rammed in your face like everyday, its like everywhere, and you just get sick of it, y'know. I guess it would be like the equivalent of Green Day.

What I seem to think, for some reason, and I don't know if the same is true over there, but its not as cool to be into things from your own country. You know what I mean?

Well that's how some kids here are.

There's even a cafe, its called Cafe Blue, and its in LA, and all they play is Britpop music. They play nothing else. All these kids go there, they totally dress like in three quarter length trenchcoats and have totally Beatles hair. Its just funny, they're totally into that. I mean, I'm into the music, but not to wanna make my hair like that.

(Laughs) No way! I didn't think from the way the press over here talk about it that anyone from England is big at all over there, except Oasis.

Its insane. Blur is huge over here, the Charlatans UK are pretty big over here.

Is there a Charlatans US or something?

Yeah, well there was a band called the Charlatans from the 60s or something, so the Charlatans had to change their name to the Charlatans UK.

Over here British bands don't do that well with the hardcore kids. With the mainstream kids it used to be like that, but not any more.

It seems that hardcore's just not big over there, y'know, Like maybe a half a percent of people are into hardcore. **Much less than that! Even so, when the American bands come over they get so much better turnout**

and better crowd response than the British bands, which is lame I suppose. I can't imagine a British band going to America and getting a better response than a local American band.

Hardcore wise, I doubt that would happen. I think the only band that could do that ok was that Fabric band, coz they're kinda popular over here, but other than that I didn't really think of any other British band, off the top of my head, that could tour here.

Okay, here's something I'm gonna throw at you to see what your response is.

Alright.

The Spice Girls.

Oh God!

(Laughs)

New Kids on the Block from England.

That's what our music charts are like.

That's sad.

Everything is like...have you heard of TakeThat?

Take That? Yeah.

The whole British music chart is boy bands and girl bands.

I'm not into that stuff.

gonna get married. She's waiting to finish school, but I can see myself getting married but not having kids for at least like four or five years after. We just wanna have fun and hang out and travel and shop, and not be weighed down with kids, y'know. I can still see myself going to shows, its just so in my blood. I just love hardcore y'know. I've been into it since like '84, I'm twenty four years old.

I thought you were older than that for some reason.

I pictured you to be about the same age as Jordan, maybe a couple of years younger.

Oh no, Jordan's like thirty. I'm twenty four.

You're quite young, man.

Yeah. (Laughs)

What about your brother? Is he older or younger than you?

My brother's younger than me. He's gonna be twenty one in April.

He signed my customs form!

(Laughs)

Does he do anything?

He did a fanzine for a while, he put out four issues, he doesn't do it anymore.

He's not in a band?

Nuh-uh. He just works here and does whatever. He's gonna be going back to school next semester and keep working here. He's gonna study computers and stuff.

Must be cool to have a brother who's into hardcore.

Yeah, its cool, coz you always have someone to go to shows with and talk about hardcore related gossip.

Would it bother you if he flaked out and just decided one day that hardcore didn't interest him anymore?

No. It doesn't bother me, I have all kinds of friends who I grew up with in hardcore, and now they don't even go to shows, and they haven't gone to shows since like '90. I still hang out with 'em. I don't really care what people do.

I just thought that if your brother...oh, I don't know.

I wouldn't take it to heart.

Cool. I guess that seeing as the tape's getting a little bit low, we'd better think about winding it up in some kind of way. Maybe you could tell me how Robert Moran is going to be influencing our lives in the near future?

I don't know. (Laughs)

Well, you're gonna be releasing some records.

I'm gonna be releasing some stuff that should influence some people. Like a Will Haven album, Shai Hulude album, I think stuff like that is gonna be the next big thing in hardcore. I think Sparkmarker's gonna do really well. That's all I can say.

And what about your new band? Your unnamed band.

We're just gonna keep practising and see if someone'll wanna put us out. Record a demo, send it to people, see if they wanna put it out.

Maybe tour Europe and come to England?

Yeah, I wanna go to England. I really wanna go to Kensington.

Have you never been to England at all?

Never. I've been to Europe but I never got to go to England. We were supposed to go but something happened.

At least you're not afraid of going on planes, so you can go where you want to go.

Its not as bad as you think it is. Its nothing, its just like you're floating.

I know, but I like to think that its more rational to be afraid of flying than to not be afraid of flying.

I don't know, I just don't really care. I mean, if you die you die, well, y'know. You don't have to worry about bills and payments.

(Laughs) Yeah, but you wouldn't be able to do anything!

Who knows? Who knows what happens when you die?

You don't have a theory?

No, I just don't care.

UNBROKEN

By Lenny Dogprint



I didn't expect you to be into it! But I read in the paper last week that the Spice Girls are number one in America at the moment.

No, not that I know of. They're popular, but no-one'll care about 'em like in six months, they'll just be disappeared. I think the only reason people care about 'em is because they're like...they have a hit quirk song, but in six months no-one's gonna care, I guarantee it.

They just won loads of awards here. We have this annual fiasco called the Brit awards, which is basically the British music industry promoting itself, and they just cleaned up, which is sad I know.

That's sad. They don't even play instruments. (Pause) What else?

Hmmm, we've come to a standstill again. How about this - now you've got a job, even though its not a regular nine to five, can you ever see yourself living the average life, with a wife and kids and house in the suburbs?

Yeah. I mean, I have a girlfriend, and we've been going together, this June will be seven years and its like, I love her, she's my best friend, she's great. And I know we're



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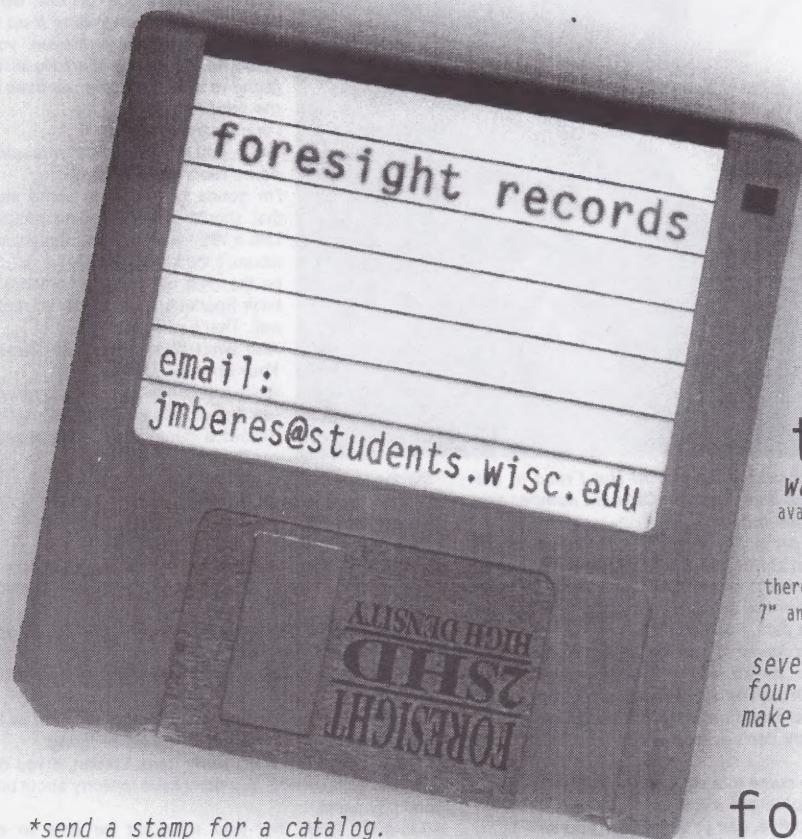
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L like a lot of people, I seem to spend many moments looking back into the past. Sometimes I really do think that my life was substantially better five years ago, and I wish I could go back to that time. I suppose everybody gets like that at times. Yet in doing this I have come to realise something that disturbs me - I am not me anymore. I have changed so much in the past few years that I truly regard myself as a different person. And if I'm truthful, I think that I am happier with who I am now than I have ever been before. So it seems even more confusing that I can occasionally want to go back several years and live my old life.

When I was sixteen my world got turned upside down - I was forced to move away from the town where I had spent almost ten years growing up. I had to leave my life behind for a new beginning in a town to which I had no intention of going. Its easy now for me to look back and see this single event as the most important in my life so far, and possibly the best, but at the time it felt like my whole world was collapsing, and I was incapable of preventing it. The hardest thing to leave behind was my friends. When I say 'friends' I refer to people with whom I truly connected. Its difficult to describe, but our 'unit' was so tight, I've never known anything like it anywhere else. Initially I didn't leave them

Discovery?

- we managed to maintain contact for nearly two years until I moved back to an area close to them in order to continue my education. And for a few months it was like old times again, it was as if I had never left. Until the summer came around.

It was when I went to university that I became straight edge. For a while I continued to hang out with my friends and do all the same things, except whenever we went out I was the only one not drinking. However, being the only sober one soon becomes extremely boring, and I went out 'socialising' less and less. They couldn't really understand why I suddenly wanted to abstain from their activities. At the same time as I was giving up all that stuff, they all began to get more into drugs, and the division started to widen. It all culminated when one kid just began completely ignoring me, and I still have no idea why he did this. My best friend of nine years slowly became the personification of everything I hate and stand against, so it was inevitable that we would eventually lose touch. My other friend I just lost touch with because I couldn't get along with the others, although he's still the same person, thank god. After losing my friends there were other things that changed, smaller things. Slowly my attitudes and viewpoints matured, along with a changing haircut and dress sense and a continued broadening of my musical taste. Adding all these changes

together, it would seem true to say that my old friends would today hardly know me at all. Why? Because I have become a different person to the one I was a few years ago.

Sometimes this bothers me, other times it does not. I honestly believe that, through experiencing this, I have become a far stronger and wiser person. But what I don't have anymore is true friends, and that is why I sometimes wish I could go back in time. Today all I have is my girlfriend and a few people that I speak to or see now and again, but no true friends. Perhaps this is a consequence of the process of growing up which is unavoidable, but I suppose that's another issue completely.

Returning to the start of this, what I'm saying is that life is full of changes. Some are big and some are small. You go through life building interests and friendships, and suddenly something changes. Maybe this change will cause something else to change. And after a while lots of changes have occurred. And all of a sudden you're living a different life, and you are no longer the person you once were. And, that makes me wonder if I'll become a different person again a few years from now, begging the question:

Do we spend our entire lives trying to discover who we are, or do we at some stage find ourselves only to be moved on by forces beyond our control?





Andy Rich

The first time I ever used e-mail was to contact Initial records. I wanted information, as usual, about limited edition vinyl. Label owner Andy always had time for my queries - being a collector himself, he understood my addiction. After numerous e-mails I decided that I wanted to interview Andy for my zine because, primarily, he is a nice guy, and secondly because his label is one of the best and I figured you should all know a little about the man behind it. Rather fittingly, this was done by e-mail, and although that format is a little restricting, I still think its very interesting.

First up tell me about the early days of Initial records. Your first release was a Pittbull 7": What were you hoping to do with the label back then, and how has the label's direction changed?

Initial started out as the culmination of three people's efforts. Now its just me running the show with lots of help from my friends and sister. Initial started with modest beginnings and no real plans for the future. Its kind of funny how I ended up running the label since it wasn't even my idea to start a label. The other two kids were Dennis and Carolyn and between the three of us we managed to muster up around \$1200 to get Initial off the ground. Repressing the first Pittbull 7" seemed logical cause they were our friends and wanted us to do it. They were also the most popular hardcore band in Detroit at the time. Its a common misconception that the label's direction has changed over the years because we never really had any direction in the first place. People think of Initial as mostly an emo label which isn't surprising since our best selling release is the Falling Forward record. That record is as emo as it gets. I still think of Initial as a hardcore label and even if we put out records that aren't 100% hardcore they will positively be by bands with hardcore backgrounds or beginnings. All things must evolve...

So what do you think about the Pittbull 7" today? Do you regret putting It out now?

I absolutely do not regret putting out the Pittbull 7" in the least bit. I still think its a great record and is an accurate representation of the music that gave us life back in 1992. They were one of my favourite bands back then and we felt honored that they would let us re-press their 7"

Initial records today - you put out mainly Louisville bands and I know that you are going to live in Louisville after you finish college. What is so special about the Louisville scene? Explain It to all those who have never been and will never go.

Louisville is any hardcore kid's wet dream. It has a rich history of very influential hardcore bands and indie-rock bands, e.g. Endpoint and Slint respectively. There are also an incredible number of great hardcore bands in Louisville at any given time. The main reason that I like it is that I have formed so many great friendships over the years which I hope to continue. It just seems the perfect place to try and take Initial to the next level with our forthcoming mailorder and distribution services. Not to mention, where else in the world would Enkindel headline over Snapcase?!? What you hear is true cause I've seen it with my own eyes... Local Louisville bands like Enkindel and Guilt can draw 600 to 1000 kids at shows, and at the last Endpoint show there was in excess of 2000 kids! That's enough hardcore in one city to satisfy anybody.

What are you studying at college and whereabouts is your college?

My proposed date of graduation is December 1996 and I will have earned a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing, with minors in Psychology and management. I attend Haworth College of Business at Western Michigan University. WMU is located in Kalamazoo exactly half-way between Chicago and Detroit.

Do any of the college kids know that they are studying with an international superstar (maybe a slight exaggeration) or are you just some quiet kid at the back of the room?

I'm definitely not some quiet kid in the back of the room. I'm no international superstar either, but as a matter of fact the school paper has

run stories on Initial / Initial bands on several occasions with a circulation of 25,000+. Local support is very important to be successful. Sitting in the back of the class is so boring. I like to be loud and opinionated, constantly challenging the professor and participating in classroom discussion. I suggest that you do the same. Its all about interaction.

What is college life like? I go to uni here in England and the whole deal seems to be beer and football. Is It the same in the States?

A large majority of the kids here seem to be pretty uninspiring. I don't blame them because most have led sheltered lives. I think every college town has their fair share of beer swilling, football playing, white hat and brown shoe wearing, fraternity belonging to idjits. WMU is no

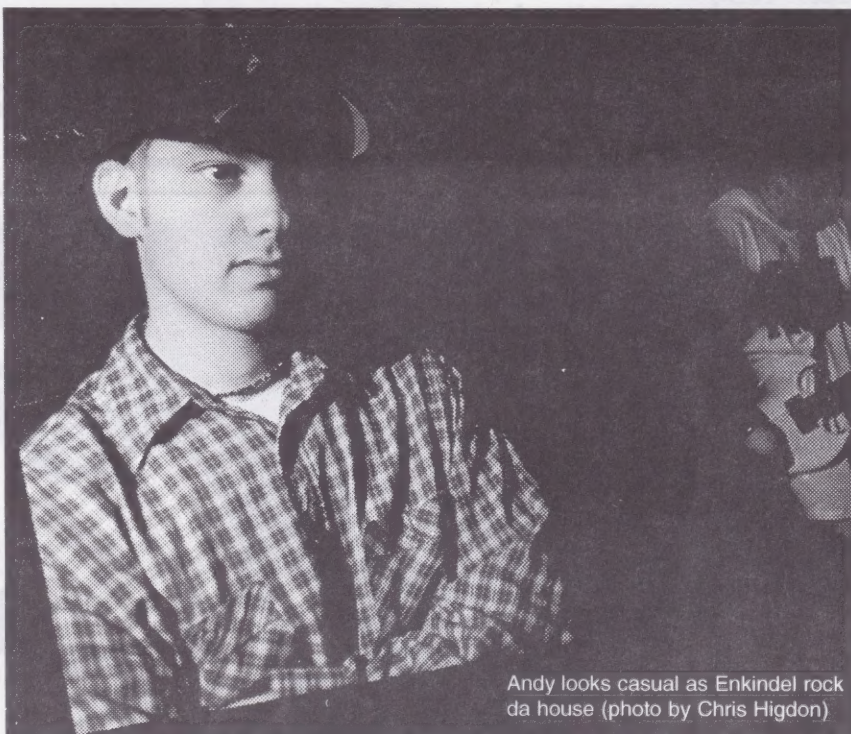
exception. Just for the record though there are a handful of great people in Kalamazoo, and even a few cool bands. Jihad aren't together anymore but they are from Kalamazoo.

So is your life as an American college kid a parody of Beverly Hills 90210? Do you watch 90210? Personally I can't get enough of it.

Yes, I do regularly watch 90210. I was torn when Dillon's father died. The heartache that poor boy has suffered is tremendous. First his father, then his beautiful wife. Please note: No college kids have that kind of money. I like that Kelly Taylor. I'm glad she beat her drug addiction. It was very inspiring.

I know you collect records and I know you have some damn cool stuff; but why do you collect? Can you explain your love of colour plastic in a rational way?

My love of color vinyl can indeed be rationalized. I've been collecting hardcore records for like eight years now and I just can't stop. It has become



Andy looks casual as Enkindel rock da house (photo by Chris Higdon)

easier lately since I can trade some of my own records for other records I am looking for. The list has pretty much been exhausted cause I can only think of one record I still want, the Underdog 7". Owning the right color vinyl 7" can increase your sense of belonging...that's my rationalization.

Don't you ever think that record collecting is futile? You can never own everything you want and vinyl will be dead in a few years (probably). Never say never! Viva la vinyl! To be honest, I'm not really as into collecting vinyl anymore. I still support vinyl but I just don't have the time on my hands to think about anything but school or Initial these days.

Is there any one record that you wish Initial could have put out? (I guess I'm really asking what is your favourite record)

I did put out my favourite record, the Falling Forward LP. Some of my other favourites are Gorilla Biscuits "Start Today" LP, Nirvana "Nevermind" LP, Endpoint "Catharsis" LP, The Suicide Machines "Destruction by definition" LP, Current "Coliseum" LP, and Enkindel "Some Assembly Required" LP.

Which do you feel is more important - being straight edge or being vegan / vegetarian? Or does it not matter?

Being vegan / vegetarian is probably more important since you are saving the lives of innocent animals as opposed to doing drugs and mostly ruining your own life (that is, if you think drugs ruin lives). Lots of others are indirectly affected when drugs are consumed, like loved ones, or the victims of drunk driving (or even the economy), but I can't escape the fact that every time meat is consumed it is the end result of the murder of innocent life. Go vegetarian, or something.

Just out of interest, could you name 5 British Hardcore bands?

I'm ashamed to admit that I couldn't name 5 British HC bands. I do have knowledge of a good amount of European HC bands like Spawn, Refused, Doughnuts, and the likes but only because they have ties with American HC labels. I will admit that I deserve to be punished. I'm a cultural illiterate when it comes to overseas HC.

Now I want you to tell me about Guilt moving to Victory. I guess it was a money thing eh? Did it bother you that you put out their first two records and then they jumped ship for a better deal, or was it totally amicable?

It was totally amicable. Duncan and I are still great friends and the move

to Victory was beneficial for both of us. Guilt wanted the exposure, and I couldn't give it to them. It also helped establish my credibility with some of the bigger distros which is good since it helps me get better distribution for the rest of the Initial family. As a matter of fact, Guilt and Enkindel are travelling the country together right now instilling fear into the lives of the unexpected. For future reference, if Enkindel ever comes to your town, hide anything breakable.

Do you wish that you could have put out their LP yourself?

Yes, I think its a great record. The technical stability that Guilt offers is incredible. I would have been proud to put it out.

Final couple of questions - Where is Initial records going? Are you gonna be the next 'corporate' hardcore label like Revelation or Victory? What new releases have you got coming soon for all us consumers?

Initial is planning on starting a mailorder and distribution in the Spring of 1997. We don't aspire to be a "corporate" label, but we do hope to be able to support ourselves (me and the bands) without having to work for the man. I guess that would make me the man. We have good intentions and I think Revelation and Victory do too. They deserve all of the success that they enjoy because they both work very hard and don't compromise to the big-wigs who probably offer them the kind of money to sell out that would make you sick. Our next four releases are ELLIOTT 7"/CSS/CDS, DESPAIR 7"/CSS/CDS, SLUGFEST CD, and ELLIOTT LP/CSS/CDS. The first three aforementioned releases are due out in September and the Elliott full length will follow shortly after. At least that's the plan at the time of this interview.

Any last comments? Wrap this up for me!

Thanks for the interview. Your questions had a nice flow to them. Send Initial lots of money (so we can put out more records, duh!) naked pictures of your parents, and Simpsons toys. Handle this interview with the same kind of caution you would conventional pieces of paper. Use your best judgement. Long live K. Scott Ritcher!

NOTE: This interview is slightly out of date now. The new Initial releases are out now, except for the Elliott LP, which may actually appear on another label altogether, but Andy isn't sure which.

Initial's next releases are for a vinyl press of the Suicide Machines LP, an Ink and Dagger 7", and something new from the Enkindels.

IR 1 - Pitbull 'S/T' 7"

814 made, all on black vinyl, now out of press. Originally released on Fist o Cuff records.

IR 2 - Ricochet 'Evolve' 7"

50 on green vinyl, 150 on blue vinyl, 500 on purple vinyl (two different covers - one numbered out of 200, the other numbered out of 300), then 800 on black vinyl. Now out of press.

IR 3 - Guilt 'Empty' 7"

1st press - 200 on burgundy vinyl, 800 on black vinyl (regular cover). 2nd - 500 on clear vinyl. 3rd - 500 on white vinyl with blue cover. 4th - 500 on white with red cover. Lots more on black vinyl, still in press.

IR 4 - Jackhammer 'S/T' 7"

200 on grey vinyl, 800 on black vinyl. Now out of press.

IR 5 - This World Rejected 'S/T' 7"

1st 100 on light blue vinyl with numbered sleeve. 2nd 100 on orange vinyl. 3rd 200 on dark blue vinyl. Lots of black vinyl, still in press.

IR 6 - Ricochet 'S/T' CD

Now out of press.

IR 7 - Falling Forward 'Hand me down' CD/LP

1st 500 LPs on blue vinyl. Still in press.

IR 8 - Guilt 'Synesthesia' 10"/CD

1000 on purple vinyl, 1000 on black vinyl. Vinyl now out of

Initial Records Discography

press, but CD still available.

IR 9 - Enkindel 'S/T' 7"

1st 500 on green vinyl.

IR 10 - Amaroq 7"

NEVER RELEASED!

IR 11 - Falling Forward / Metroschifter 'Acoustic' 7"

1st 500 on pinky red vinyl. Still in press.

IR 12 - Roosevelt's Inaugural Parade 'S/T' 7"

1st 1000 on red vinyl, 2nd 500 on blue vinyl, 3rd 300 on white vinyl. Lots of black vinyl, still in press.

IR 13 - Enkindel 'Some assembly required' LP/CD

1st 300 LPs on green vinyl. Still in press.

IR 14 - Slamdek A-Z book + CD compilation

No vinyl. Boo!

IR 15 - Elliott 'In transit' 7"

1st 100 on white vinyl (numbered), 2nd 400 on clear vinyl.

IR 16 - Despair 'As we bleed' 7"/CD/CSS

1st 100 on blue vinyl (numbered), 2nd 400 on white vinyl.

IR 17 - Slugfest 'S/T' CD

Includes their 'Buried alive' 7" which is quite rare.



Record Collecting - a nerd explains

I remember several years ago buying a 7" single and being totally blown away. I thought the song was okay, but it was the record itself that impressed me the most. It was the first piece of coloured vinyl I had owned, and I loved it. For some inexplicable reason I couldn't stop holding that record up and looking at it. It was a nice green colour, it looked nice in the light. I think it was that record that somehow lead, years later, to me becoming one of the most obsessive record collectors on the planet. Although a lot of people ask me why I collect records, I never know how to explain it. And for some reason I have decided to try to explain it now. Let's go.

As far as I can tell, there are two main issues concerned with collecting records. First is the amount of records being purchased. I can easily justify owning hundreds of records, although other people find it difficult. How can owning more records than less be a bad thing? Like everyone, I buy records for the music. I recall that when I was younger I hated listening to a song unless I knew all the lyrics. Nowadays I am the total opposite - if I know most of the words to a song it is because I have played it to the point of exhaustion. I also find that nowadays I can recall or recite songs after only one or two plays, thus I get bored of new things much quicker. The more records I own and buy, the less I will play each, therefore the less bored I will get of each one. Surely nobody can argue that greater choice can be a bad thing? However, it does seem that most people are not concerned about the numbers of records I own, what really bothers them is the amounts of money I spend. I find it funny that people should be so concerned about how I choose to spend my money. Surely my money is my concern? Everyone spends

their money on different things and places different values on different commodities, it just so happens that I prefer to purchase records more than other consumer items. It may seem strange to some that I could pay £20 for a single 7", yet I find it equally ridiculous that someone could justify forking out £130 for a Jean-Paul Gaultier t-shirt. As long as I can justify buying what I buy, no-one else should even give a damn. And where hardcore is concerned, money will probably be the one greatest single deciding factor as to whether small record labels will survive and continue, so I am helping active people too.

The second issue that I wish to address is the 'geekiness' of collecting records - the desire to own everything on colour vinyl, 1 st pressings, or whatever other limited versions exist. This is what I collect, but I cannot explain why I do it. Limited records turn me on, ok? Colour vinyl just plain impresses me, but most other people have no preference at all. That's the best way to explain it I think - you either care or you don't. After all, its not like I would jump at the opportunity to wear a bright pink shirt, but a bright pink Burn 7" makes me cream my pants. Strange? I guess so. I put it down to my desire to be different to the majority. I would rather be one of the 100 to own a colour record than one of the 3000 who own a black one. But I also enjoy the challenge of finding these obscure items. The sense of achievement after finding a record you have been looking for for three years is immense. I know it sounds weird, but I've met loads of people through collecting records, and no-one can say a bad word about that.

It sounds like I'm trying to defend myself here. Maybe (unintentionally) that is the case. I do

acknowledge that there are many people who think I'm just plain weird, and that hurts a bit. I just wanted to try and explain why I do it. Yet, nomatter how much I write about it, there is one main reason why I continue with this habit - I enjoy it. Nothing else matters, does it?

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7" Records Wanted

Anguish - '39 steps' - Colour if possible
 Avail - 1st (Sunspot Records)
 Baby Gopal - both 7"s
 Backdraft - White vinyl
 Backlash - New Start records 7" - Colour vinyl
 Bad Trip - 1st - Bellbottom records
 Bad Trip - 'Elevator' - Colour vinyl
 Billingsgate - 'Reach Out' - White vinyl
 Blind Spot - Conversion Records 7" - Red vinyl
 Bloodlet - 'Husk'
 Bold - Pink vinyl
 Borderline - 'Unseen' - Green vinyl
 Bouncing Souls - 'Neurotic' - Gold vinyl
 Brotherhood 'No tolerance' - Blue vinyl
 Canon - Purple vinyl
 Champions - 1st 7" - Unique records
 Chicano Chnst - Nemesis 7" - Colour vinyl
 Christie FD/Jimmy EW split 7"
 CIV - 1st - White vinyl
 Clutch - Clear vinyl
 Channel- 2nd
 Congress - Red vinyl and purple vinyl
 Conupted Morals - Numbered sleeve
 Crimpshrine - Split 7"s
 Despair - '1000 cries' - orange vinyl
 Earth Crisis - 'All out war' - Blue or Green vinyl
 Earthmover - Autonomy records
 Endpoint / Sunspring - 1st press (photocopy sleeve)
 Endpoint / Sunspring 2nd split - Clear vinyl
 Endpoint - 'Idiots' - Clear vinyl
 Enkindel/Erchint split 7"
 Eye for an Eye - Red vinyl
 Face to Face - White vinyl
 Face Value - Grey vinyl
 Final Conflict - Nemesis 7" - Color vinyl
 Four Walls Falling - 1st
 Frail - Kidney room records 7"
 Fuckers - Merge records
 Function - Green vinyl
 Game Face - Network sound - Purple vinyl
 Green Day - '1000 hours' - Green vinyl
 Green Day - 'Sweet children' - Pink vinyl
 Grip - Gold vinyl
 Gutwrench/ Sleeper - Clear vinyl
 Hardball - Colour vinyl
 Harvest - Ferret records 7" - Colour vinyl
 Integrity - Red vinyl
 Intent to Injure - 'Keep us strong' - Blue vinyl
 Junction - Split 7"
 Junction - 'Falling and Laughing'
 Just Cause - Colour vinyl
 Kingpin 7"
 Lash Out / Contention - Red vinyl and grey vinyl
 Lament - Pink vinyl, Blue vinyl, Maroon vinyl
 Lifetime - New Age records 7" - Colour vinyl
 Mind Over Matter - Both 7"s - Colour vinyl
 Majority of One - 'One man' - Colour sleeve
 Mouthpiece - 1st 7" - Colour vinyl
 Neanderthal - 'Fighting music' - Colour vinyl
 No Use For A Name - 1st 7" (Not Slap a Ham)
 Operation Ivy - 'Plea for peace' - White vinyl
 Piebald - Hydrahead records 7" - Blue vinyl
 Pinhead Gunpowder - No Reality records 7"
 Pitchfork - Colour vinyl
 Positive Approach - Blue vinyl
 Pressure Release - Colour vinyl
 Quicksand - Promo 7" for 1st LP
 Railhead - 'Forever' - Clear vinyl and pink vinyl
 Release - 1st 7" (Action Packed records)
 Release / Courage split 7"
 Release - 'No longer' - Red vinyl and gold vinyl
 Ressurrection - 1st 7" - Purple vinyl
 Reveal - Green vinyl
 Ricochet - Blue vinyl and green vinyl
 Resolution / Undertow split 7"
 Samiam - 'I am' - Clear vinyl
 Shelter - 'In defense of reality' - Clear vinyl
 Sick of it all - 1st - Red vinyl
 Sparkmarker - Jiffy - Purple vinyl
 Stnfe - 1st - Indecision records
 Strife - 'My fire burns on' - Colour vinyl
 Statement - 'Don't sacrifice me' - Blue vinyl
 Stronghold - S/T - Red vinyl
 Sunspring - Red vinyl
 Swiz - Down - Green vinyl
 Swiz - 'With Dave' - Blue and White vinyl
 Sub Zero - Blue vinyl
 Snapcase - 'Comatose' - Blue vinyl and solid yellow

vinyl and red vinyl
 Split Lip - Blue vinyl
 Structure - Noode records 7" - red vinyl
 Sunny Day Real Estate/Shudder to Think tour 7"
 Tearwater - Colour vinyl
 Turning Point - Blue vinyl
 Temperance - Trinity records 7" - Red vinyl
 Unbroken - 'You won't be back' - Blue vinyl
 Unbroken - 'Circa 77' - Purple vinyl
 Uniform Choice - 'Demos' - Colour vinyl
 Unity - 1st press, Blue vinyl press
 Vision - 'One and the same' - Blue vinyl
 Voice of Reason - 2nd
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 1st
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 'Dogpile' - Gold vinyl
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 'Rasta mis huevos' - White vinyl
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 'Est 1988' - Glow in the dark vinyl
 Walk Proud - New Age records 7" - Green vinyl
 Yuppicide - 'You've been warned' - Colour vinyl
 Youth Defense League - Blue vinyl
 Zero Tolerance 7" - Colour vinyl
 V/A - 'HC 1990 East meets West' - Clear vinyl

12" Records Wanted

2 Line Filler - Break Even Point records LP
 Backlash 12"
 Bloodlet - 'Ethnogen' - Purple vinyl
 Brotherhood - Pink vinyl
 Bad Trip - All LPs - Colour vinyl
 Cable - Yellow vinyl
 Cause for Alarm - New LP - Colour vinyl
 Chorus - 10" - Black/White swirl vinyl
 Chorus - 'Truth' - Colour vinyl
 Circle Storm - Colour vinyl
 Damnation 10" - Colour vinyl
 Dayspring - 10" - Colour vinyl
 Disembodied LP - Colour vinyl

Drive like Jehu - 1st LP - Clear vinyl
 Earth Cnsis - 'Machines' - Green vinyl
 Endpoint - 'After taste' - Red vinyl
 Face to Face - Red vinyl and yellow vinyl
 Game Face - Dr Strange records LP - Colour vinyl
 Gorilla Biscuits - Purple vinyl
 Headfirst - 'The enemy' - Colour vinyl
 Hell No - 'Skin job'
 Intent - 'Drift'
 Jawbreaker - 'Unfun' - Green vinyl
 Judge - 'Bringin it down' - Green vinyl
 Krupted Peasant Farmerz LP
 Lifetime - 'Background' - Colour vinyl
 Metroschifter - new LP - Colour vinyl
 Mind over Matter - 'Security' - Red vinyl
 Mouthpiece - Colour vinyl
 Olivelawn - 'Sap' - Colour vinyl
 One step Ahead - Colour vinyl
 Redemption 87 - Clear vinyl
 Resolution 10"
 Shades Apart - 'Dude danger' 12" (Sunspot records)
 Shelter - 1st - Bugundy vinyl
 Snapcase - Blue vinyl
 Sleeper - 2nd - Pink vinyl
 Strife - 'One truth' - Red vinyl and blue vinyl
 Swiz - 'Hell yes I cheated'
 Texas is the Reason - White vinyl
 Threadbare - new LP - Colour vinyl
 Turning Point LP - Clear vinyl
 Unbroken - 'Life love regret' - Blue vinyl
 Uniform Choice - 'Screaming for change' - Colour vinyl
 Visual Discrimination - 'In vain' - Colour vinyl
 Vision - Purple vinyl and grey vinyl
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 'Coloring fun' 12"
 Voodoo Glowskulls - 'Who is this is' - Glowing vinyl
 Walk Proud - 'RIP' - Colour vinyl
 Whirlpool - 2nd LP - Colour vinyl
 Yuppicide - 'Fear love' - Colour vinyl
 V/A - Thing that ate Floyd

I also collect most labels releases, e.g. Blackout!, Chapter, Conquer the World, Conversion, Crucial Response, Doghouse, Edison, Equal Vision, Excursion, Hydrahead, Indecision, Jade Tree, Lookout! (early stuff), Moo Cow, Nemesis, New Age, New Start, Redemption, Revelation, Rhetoric, Slap a Ham, Sunspot, Victory, Workshed, Wreckage, etc. Get the picture? Please help!

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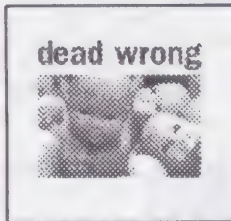
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[Pre-recorded] Music Reviews

Before you read any of my [poor] reviews, let me explain the purpose of this section. After much thought I decided to review a small number of records each issue. Not because I think I have to, or because I am so dumb as to blindly follow everyone else's zine contents, but because I think it is necessary. I know that I buy a lot of music, and I get a lot out of it. I, as a consumer, know that people sometimes need a little guidance in finding the best products. I am thus trying to help others. I also try to give support to smaller labels, and this section helps give those people a little extra exposure.



Beta Minus Mechanic/Holden split 7"

Beta's 7" was one of the best of last year for me. This 7" doesn't rank quite so highly, although they do continue in the exact same style. They play very Verbal Assault style music covered with a sweet female vocal, and are extremely catchy. Holden I've never heard before, but they sound the same as Beta - I swear that this isn't really a split 7", it's the same band with two names. A prime example of 'summer music', just in time for walkman and t-shirt weather. (Fistheldhigh records)

Bongzilla 'Mixed bag' 7"

As you may have worked out from their name, these guys like to smoke a bit. Laid back and casual though, no way! The vocal is quite distorted (or the singer is completely fucked) and the music is kinda heavy - almost as if they are being tortured whilst playing. Side one has a great rythm to it, whilst side two is slower and more grindy. I guess the label's own description is best - 'noise rock sludge'. With members Magma, Muleboy and Meanstreak, you know these guys are to be taken seriously. (Rhetoric Records)



Capone 'what we've shared' 7"

From the German label that launched Strain comes the debut Capone 7". Capone also come from Vancouver, and play heavy hardcore much like Strain. This is faster than Strain though, perhaps that's the drumming. I like this, the lyrics seem sincere, although my only complaint is a lack of variety. Time will surely lead to improvement. (Heartfirst Records)

Cast Iron Hike 's/t' 7"

After about 20 seconds I am impressed. The sound of a groovier (less punk) Sparkmarker fills my room, and is very welcome to stay and hang around a while. Tight as hell, the second song really stands out as 'the one'. I've never been so addicted so quickly, I need more. Oh, apparently this lot just got snapped up by Victory, so you are guaranteed to hear more from them very soon. (Trustkill records)



Disembodied 'the confession' 7"

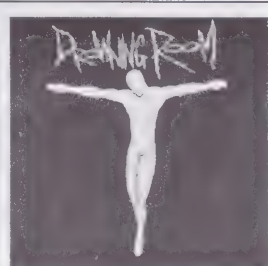
Holy shit, this is it! Moo Cow hits the nail right on the head with this one. I'd never heard Disembodied before, although I'd heard good things about them. They are slow and heavy and metal, and thank god they don't sound too polished. They remind me of Damnation and Unbroken, but neither of those in particular. Not exactly death metal like the ad says, but getting there. (Moo Cow Records)

Cavity 's/t' 7"

Words that spring to mind whilst this disc is spinning: heavy, slow, grinding, intense, sick, loud, heavy, fuck. My god, my ears are actually bleeding. Cavity are the musical incarnation of a bad toothache. Yes, this is a positive review. (Rhetoric records)

Despair 'As we bleed' 7"

From Buffalo, NY, Despair play slow and heavy hardcore with a metal 'edge'. Any fan of heavy sXe will surely like this band, and this 7" is their best release to date in my opinion. Nothing else to say - get this or fuck off. (Initial Records)



Drowning Room/Veil split 7"

Drowning Room steal the show on this record I reckon. They start off sounding like Starkweather, then change to a NY style band a bit like Hatebreed, with grooving guitars akin to Cast Iron Hike at times. Overall a great hardcore band, I hope to hear more of them soon. Veil can obviously kick some shit too, but their song just doesn't live up to their

two 7"s. They are very fast paced with screaming vocals, but sound almost as if they are in too much of a hurry to me. Two different bands on one great 7" record. (Moo Cow/Fistheldhigh Records)

Elliott 's/t' 7"

Featuring Chris Higden on vocals, Elliott pick up right where Falling Forward left off. There are only two songs on this 7", which is my only complaint, since both totally rule. I'm sure you can imagine the sound - emotionally heartfelt without being 'emo'. I like to picture myself driving around the locations shown on the cover with these songs playing. Mood enhancing stuff. Another great summer record that I can't get enough of. (Initial Records)

Jolt 'old Milwaukee' 7"

Jolt are Jawbreaker. Just one listen to this record will have you convinced. The similarities are endless - both bands have three members, both have names beginning with the letter 'j' and both sound the same. Jolt even thank Jawbreaker on the sleeve! Is this a bad thing? No way! Jolt have filled the gap left by the aforementioned supergroup when they 'matured'. Great stuff! (Rhetoric Records)



Impel 'writhe in pain' 7"

The one thing I noticed from the insert is that the singer is the guy from Kill Holiday. Surprising as it may seem, Impel also sound quite a lot like that band, but way better. They have a nice groove to them. Clean sounding rocky music from California, nothing too special, but obviously these guys have talent. Another summer record for me to pop in my walkman on a sunny day. (Ammunition Records)



[Pre-recorded] Music Reviews

Less Than Jake 'Pezoore' LP

Okay, I'll admit it, I actually like some pop punk bands. Less Than Jake at first sound like your average ska-punk band, nothing special. After one play I am not impressed. After two plays I am tapping my foot. After three plays I am beginning to like it. On the fourth play I am singing along and dancing around. Now I am addicted. These guys really are the masters of catchiness. All day long I am singing their songs, I just can't help it. I'm sure Less Than Jake already have a small army of loyal servants, now they have one more. (Rhetoric Records)

Reversal of Man/Enemy Soil split 7"

Reversal of Man I like. They remind me of Rorschach, and obviously that is a good thing. They even have a Judge style logo on the label, which is pretty cool. However, I think that Enemy Soil overshadow them here. Enemy Soil play that Slap a Ham and Bovine style crazy thrash. They go from slow heavy sludginess to fast thrashing evilness back to grind. You have to play this loud to appreciate it. (Fistheldhigh Records)



Strain 'These years/regret' 7"

What can I possibly say about Strain?

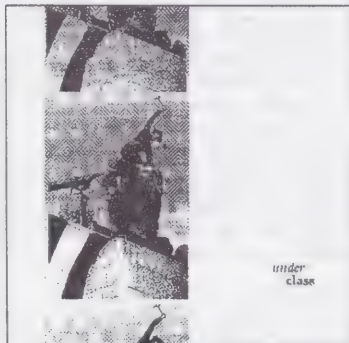
They play heavy heavy

hardcore that verges on metal, yet isn't. They are probably the best band that do this style. This 7" continues the crusade with 2 more songs, the first recording since their LP on New Age. Playing it loud really does increase its power tenfold. The CD features extra songs that are planned to be released as a 7" by New Age in

the future, but don't hold your breath. I should be getting some CDs to distro in England, but be quick! (Heartfirst Records)

Underclass 's/t' 7"

I saw this band play once, a long time ago. The singer jumped into the crowd and started screaming like a maniac. Since then obviously nothing has changed. Fast, manic, crazy, noisy, screamed, intense punky hardcore. The sort of thing that makes a great pit. Live they were much better, but for those of you not lucky enough to experience them, I suggest you send for this little gem. (Tadpole/Refusenik Records)



Withstand 's/t' 7"

Previous reviews I have read have always passed over this as an average release, but I thought I'd set the record straight. This is bad! True, it's not very original, its metal mosh style hardcore, but it does have a certain something to make it stand out. Maybe its the production? It sounds raw, like proper hardcore should sound, not like all these shitty over-produced metal bands. Songs are well structured, slow and painful. I like it a lot. (Fistheldhigh Records)



Mineral 's/t' 7"

Sometimes I get real distraught that Sunny Day Real Estate broke up. It hurts to know that there will never be anymore SDRE records. But when I feel like this I know that Mineral will rescue me. They are the best SDRE substitute in the world. This 7" is the same as their previous material - emotional, poppy, rocky, melancholy, cheerful. It does take a few plays to get into it, but when you begin to appreciate it, you begin to love it. I love this style, and Mineral do it better than most. (Caulfield Records)



Skankin' Pickle 'the green album'

The one thing that pisses me off about straight edge hardcore is its apparent lack of a sense of humor. At the opposite end of the spectrum, poppy punk bands can never seem to take anything seriously. I admire that, its very important to maintain a sense of fun. Anyhow, Skankin' Pickle are indeed a very fun band. They opt to play ska influenced punk rock, and they do it well, though not as well as Less Than Jake. This LP is put out as a tribute to their main influences, and features covers of songs by their favourite bands, including Devo, Bad Brains, and Gorilla Biscuits. Each member gives a little explanation as to why each song was chosen, making the whole package a lot more 'cute'. I love this stuff, its kinda like punk party music.

Stampin' Ground - advance tape of LP

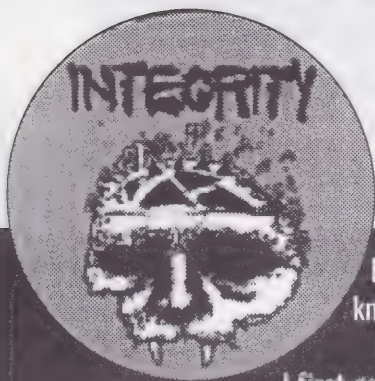
If you have heard Stampin' Ground before, this might be a shock to you. It totally eclipses all else they have done so far. The 7"s were a little monotonous, but this LP has it all. The pace is a lot more varied. The vocals are deeper. The overall sound has improved a great deal. Too many people have compared Stampin' Ground to Earth Crisis in the past. No more. I'd play this over the latest Earth Crisis LP anytime. If you want heavy hardcore, you can't go wrong with this one. (We Bite Records)

Tribute 'Torch Songs' 7"

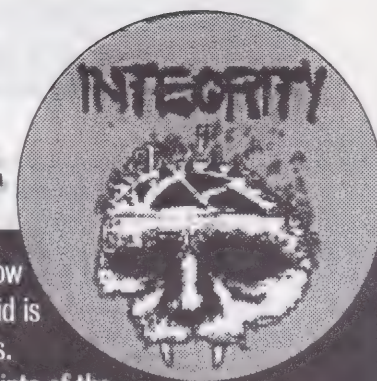
Tribute are a British band who are usually categorised under the heading of emo. I do not usually like emo, but at times I can tolerate it, and occasionally I can actually like it. This is one of those times. The second side is the stand out winner, full of summer imagery, which is always good for me. Its got a great melody to it, and rocks too. The best British band to do this style I think. I haven't got a clue what the lyrics are about, but maybe that's the point? (Day After Records)



Music's only music. A series of sounds. Nothing more. You don't have to like it to respect those who make it. In our 'scene' there is too much prejudice against people, bands, labels. There shouldn't be. The scene is built on music, the scene is judged by music. Music is our scene but our scene has become more than music. Give everything a chance, even if its only once. Each piece of music is someone's work and creation. Respect music. Learn to see the beauty in everything. And don't judge what you don't understand.



Dwid



Dwid sings for Integrity. Dwid owns the Dark Empire label, now known as Holy Terror. Dwid writes a zine called Bloodbook. Dwid is often criticised for instances of violence. These are the facts.

I first got to know Dwid through trading records. During the finer points of the negotiation, I asked if he would be okay about doing an interview with me for my forthcoming zine. He agreed. A couple of weeks later we did the interview on the phone, and I think it went quite well. However, Dwid had recorded it on his answer machine, and finally (two months later) confessed to having lost the cassette. So, rather hastily, I set it up again, and it went okay. However, 'take 2', which is what you are about to read, covered totally different subject matter, and turned out far less controversial. None the less, I think it is still an accurate representation of Dwid - a man who naturally feels a need to defend his actions, because some people are all too eager to criticise and pass judgement. Sure, he may not be politically correct, but at least he is honest. He speaks his mind and has no fear whatsoever of voicing his opinion. Above all, Dwid is sincere, and you can't not respect that.

Marcus: Okay, get ready for a beep every 15 seconds.

Dwid: (Laughs) Okay.

M: So, I thought if we did more of a sort of conversation style interview than a formal questions and answers thing.

D: That's cool.

M: Cos I have a few things that I wanted to ask you about, but I don't want to stick to it too much, okay?

D: Sure.

M: Right. Although, one thing I want to ask you at the start, cos when I told everybody I'd done an interview with you the first question they're all asking me is "Is he still straight edge?"

D: No, I'm not.

M: No?

D: No.

M: Cos everyone says, I mean, I don't know much about it, but people say that you were then you weren't then you were kinda thing.

D: I was when I was 16 or whatever, y'know.

M: Yeah.

D: We put out our first record on Victory, back then I was, and then like most of the people involved within the straight edge movement here in America were basically...pretty silly, y'know, and a lot of stuff they were doing was. They were saying they were, and they were doing all this stuff to help people and all this, but in reality they were sneaking behind peoples' backs using their band's publicity or fame to take advantage of...in particular, peoples' girlfriends and stuff like that.

M: Yeah?

D: And like a couple of my friends got burned by that, and I thought that was pretty crazy that a few guys, who are still heralded as these saints of hardcore, saints of straight edge, but in reality they were just dirty fuckin' pigs y'know?

M: Do you want to name any names?

D: No, there's no reason to.

M: I'm just curious because...

D: Its like saying that Ghandi was a paedophile to these kids, they're not gonna believe that. And its probably who you think it is, y'know. And if I was to say that publicly, no-one's gonna believe it, just like in our country if you say the CIA had something to do with the death of John F. Kennedy, people say "Oh, you're a crackpot, that's impossible". The same is true with this, because people are so blindly believing in this facade that these guys put out.

M: I've heard a story for years off different people, when you mention Chain of Strength they go "No, they were all fakes".

D: Yeah, I'm talking about the kings of all that movement though. Its not Chain of Strength, those guys were obviously fakes.

M: Were they?

D: Down to their posed photographs for the record cover.

M: (Laughs)

D: They were like '1-2-3-Jump'-Click!-Took the

picture. In their basement none the less.

M: (Laughs) Great! Right, another thing I want to ask is if you do a lot of interviews.

D: Yeah, actually I do.

M: Did you not used to do very many compared to now?

D: It depends, y'know. Sometimes people wanna do interviews, sometimes they don't. A lot of times people send their interviews through the mail, they're form interviews, that's what I like to call 'em, that have the exact same questions. Y'know, like everyone has the exact same questions. Like the first question "Who's in the band?", the second question "Are you guys straight edge?", the third question "Who are your favourite bands?", etc, etc, etc, and it gets very boring. Its like, why would you even waste your stamp or envelope or time sending me these kind of questions? I mean, you've probably read them five thousand times from other kids' zines, and its just a waste of everyone's time, including theirs and the readers, so I just feel that its just pointless.

M: So, out of interest, what did you think of the interview you did with that Lenny who does 'Dogprint' zine?

D: It was kind of good, I mean, when we did it it came out pretty good, but when he went down to translate it he changed words, misspelled things, and miswrote words, so it just made me look like a baboon y'know.

M: The thing was with that, I bought the zine and...

D: Its like... one thing, I mean, someone should have spellcheck if they have a publication. They should be able to check and see if things are misspelled. Secondly, they should at least proof read it, there was one thing where he said something about animals or being tested on animals and I said "well, animals have brains too", I think I said, and instead he quoted me as saying "brains have brains too."

M: (Laughs)

D: Gimme a break, y'know, that's like something that a young kid would do, and this guy's older. Its just unfortunate that people get so eager for someone to have a magazine now that they don't even care...they just wanna make a magazine for the fuck of it y'know, they don't even check to see its quality, and that's unfortunate. Obviously there's a few mistakes, no-one can be flawless, and there's gonna be a few typos, but this whole thing is riddled with misspellings, misquotes, and words out of place. Its not even my article alone, but all the articles have that. He doesn't read it, he just prints it.

M: I asked about this because it said inside "probably the most in-depth interview with Dwid ever", and I...

D: In his opinion.

M: That's what I thought. I read it and its just all the same issue over and over again. Its him saying 'violence is wrong', and you're saying 'not all the time', and he says 'yes it is', and its just...

D: Basically it should've said "the most emo interview with Integrity ever."

M: I just got the impr...

D: I said to him, I think in the interview, "do you think you're gonna change my mind by saying this stuff? I don't care y'know." I mean, its already been proven to him at the one show he was talkin' about where, if you don't stand up for yourself, then you're gonna get hurt bad and go to the hospital, and that's what happened to him, and I go "how did that feel? Did you like that? Did you like being defenseless like a martyr?" That's pathetic, that's sad.

M: Uh-huh.

D: I mean, to deny what your bestial nature is...especially for people who are vegetarians or vegans, they're supposed to be 'in touch' with the animal kingdom, so they should act accordingly - they should act predatorial just like their animal brothers and sisters. Instead they wanna be sympathetic towards animals but then intellectual and above animals in the same breath. It makes no sense, y'know. Totally madness. I'm not saying anything against him in particular, but it is pretty disheartening to hear all these kids like promoting being a victim, and that's sad. That's what our society's gonna have now, the underground movement of society which this kind of music and other forms that are similar... all the people involved in that are gonna be growing up to be just as fucking weak as the mainstream people, in fact ten times weaker, y'know. And that leads them up to being put in a worse situation than they were originally that bought them to this alternative lifestyle and alternative side of music, and its like...they're gonna basically be easy prey for the society at large.

M: Its like "we're gonna revolt against society but at the same time fit in and not make any noise."

D: Its like, you're gonna revolt, so you're gonna cut off your arms and legs and watch TV all the time, be a vegetable. What kind of revolution is that? No-one's gonna fuckin' feel that, no-one cares. Then you just make yourself into an abstract piece of nothing, you're just nothing, just sitting there in the corner making nothing, no difference, nothing. By being a victim, nothing. Its unfortunate that people look at that as being a great thing, I mean, that's why Christianity was designed, so people would think "Oh, I should be a martyr too," because basically the people who wrote the bible were people who were in charge of society, and they said "hey, we're gonna write this book, we're gonna get all these saps to believe that if you're a martyr, if you're a victim, that's a great thing. So then we'll be able to push these fuckin' chumps around all day long."

M: (Laughs)

D: And people make me out to be the bad guy for telling them that this is the way reality is. I'm a dick for that. Well fuck you, you fuckin' dorks, you're the ones who get beat up all the time and don't understand why. Hmmm, I wonder why? If you fuckin' stand up for yourself it'd be a different situation, y'know. Instead they just wanna fuckin' be victims, be victims, be victims, be victims. And then

they can't understand what happens, y'know. Its crazy, crazy.

M: Hmmm.

D: They should emulate their... their animal fuckin' heritage, that's the key to it all, especially these fuckin' kids who are so concerned with animal rights, they should act accordingly, they should act like their...

M: Yeah. Obviously there's gotta be...I don't know...but you're not advocating violence in everything.

D: I'm not...I told that kid Lenny...I'm not sayin' "anyone you meet, punch 'em in the mouth," I'm not saying that.

M: Oh, I know.

D: If somebody comes to you and pushes you and says "hey you little fuckin' freak, so you like this kind of music, you little dork," and pushes you in the chest, and makes you take a couple of steps back or knocks you on the ground, don't go "oh, that's not the way hardcore tells me to be, I won't fight, I'll just lay here and be beaten like a fuckin' slug." That's pathetic, and that makes everyone involved in the 'hardcore' movement look like fuckin' imbeciles, including themselves, y'know. And even worse, these people are gettin' beaten up and hurt, and they just let it happen, cos they don't wanna stand up.

M: Exactly.

D: So what's the difference? If you're gonna get beat up, you're gonna get beat up, but at least inflict some damage on the other guy. Then at least maybe you can save a little bit of the punching from yourself.

M: Well, I do agree with that.

D: Cos no matter what, in a confrontation, you're gonna get hit. That goes without saying, but the chances of getting hit more is when you just stand there and let 'em start kicking you. If you hit back, then maybe they'll be like "Oww, that hurt," and then they're gonna fuckin' give up and go away, and then maybe you'll have a better chance of surviving. At least, if you're that big of a...if these people are that big of a weakling then at least throw one punch, y'know...what's the difference? If you're gonna get beat up, at least inflict a little bit of damage on your opponent.

M: Well, I'm not coming from the same direction he came from, but...

D: I'm just ranting and raving more about that article Lenny did. I'm not talkin' directly to you, its more like...my forum.

M: Yeah, well I do agree with what you're saying, cos there are some people who don't understand anything but violence, but the whole reason I bought up Lenny's zine is because I got the impression that halfway through the interview, or less than halfway through, you weren't really into talking to him, and you weren't really into the interview because the questions he was asking you...

D: He was using his magazine as a way to try to throw me off, catch me off guard. Its stupid, y'know. And he couldn't do it. He thought that because all his friends believe the same thing that he's trying to convey in his magazine...he thought that I should believe the same, and with a little bit of pressure from his words that I'm gonna crack and think "guess what? You're right. I should be a victim, I should be just lying here on my back letting everybody step all over me. That's the way to be. You're right, I'm wrong." But I never did, and y'know, he just wouldn't let up on the same stupid fuckin' topic. Its ridiculous.

M: Like he wanted you to say were either a Neanderthal or...

D: He wanted me to say I was wrong and he was right, and all these other kids are right, and I'm wrong somehow.

M: Anyway...

D: And for them maybe it is right, maybe that's what they wanna be, maybe that's what they're born to be, y'know, a doormat. Well they're welcome to be that, I don't give a fuck.

M: (Laughs)

D: Do they think that they can change people who are gonna stand up for themselves, and that's gonna give them a less of a chance of chance of getting in a confrontation with someone like myself who is willing to stand up for themselves? But then there's another level on top of that where people are just randomly beating others... that's not me, contrary to popular rumours

said "How come you are unscratched, how come you don't even have a bruise?", and she said "Well I did get hit by the singer from Integrity", and he's like "Point out the singer from this band and we'll have him arrested". So she looks around, she looks right at me, and then looks at this fat guy and points at him, a fat skinhead, and said that that was the singer from Integrity.

M: (Laughs)

D: And so they went and questioned that guy, and he's like "I'm not in Integrity, what are you talkin' about?" So basically this girl was looking for attention because these other people were getting attention because there were cry babies because of...kids went up and called One Life Crew derogatory Jewish terms, so then they got in a fight with these other kids, and so on and so the story goes.

M: So you definitely didn't hit a girl?

D: No. I mean, if I would have, don't you think that since Victory is distributed by Sony now that I would be in court up to my ass for this? Don't you think? I mean that's the way America is, law suits out the ass, I'd be fuckin' sitting in a jail cell awaiting trial like fuckin' OJ over something like that in a heartbeat, coz they'd be "Oh my God, Victory, they're bazillionaires, oh my god, we're gonna buy a mansion outta this." Its just a bunch of rumours from fuckin' goofs.

M: I kinda figured that.

D: That's basically how you gotta look at a rumour like that. I mean, if any of this stuff is true then why am I not sitting in court, y'know, coz if I beat her...I'm two hundred pounds. If I beat a small PC girl in the head several times, she's not gonna be able to talk to policemen or anyone else and say "I was beaten up by this fellow, I'm very upset." She'd be bloody as fuck, y'know. I weigh two hundred pounds, she probably had to weigh like under a hundred pounds. Come on!

M: Okay...

D: I'm not trying to brag about it, but its just like if a semi-truck hit a normal size car, its gonna do a lot more damage than if two cars collide same weight and velocity. And besides that, do you know these kids would be so happy to sue, and their fuckin' mommies would sue, and their daddies would sue. Its just a bunch of fuckin' gossip and shit. These kids were calling Brummel and shit, and Brummel said "Okay, send me some photos of the girl then." And they're like "We have a video of it", and he said "Well send me the video then." And they never would, coz they don't have a video, they were trying to call his bluff coz they wanted money, y'know.

M: You don't sound very enthusiastic about Victory.

D: No, I like Victory. I just don't like these little gossiping dorks bothering Tony or bothering me.

M: No, I mean about the Sony thing. Is that true?

D: No, I'm saying that sarcastically as far as that's what I hear from a lot of kids, they cry about that." Those guys are distributed by Sony." They cry, but then they're so quick to buy Revelation stuff which is a major label. Its not distributed by it, is. They put out fuckin' Bush! I mean, how much bigger can you get? I don't see Brummel puttin' out no Nirvana box sets or nothin'. Who cares even if he fuckin' did? Don't buy the records then, you fuckin' dorks! Tony's not twisting anyone's arm to buy that shit, and they don't have to buy it. There's a lot of other labels that they are just as fuckin'...y'know... just as able to buy records from than they are from Victory. But the reason they keep buying Victory is coz he has good bands the kids like 'em. And they just wanna bitch coz have nothing better to do with their time than fuckin' complain. The people that complain, that is.



M: Right, well, this is something that I had wanted to ask you but didn't want you to think I was asking for the wrong reason.

D: Sure.

M: At a show, and obviously I don't know which show since I don't live in America, possibly the infamous show where the riot erupted involving One Life Crew, I heard that you hit some guy and his girlfriend.

D: No, that's not true.

M: No?

D: What happened was, there was a girl who was hit amidst all this chaos, and she went up to the police and said that I beat her up really bad. And ironically, I was standing maybe ten feet away from where she was telling the police, in clear visible sight, and he said "Well where did he hit you?" and she said "About the face several times", and he looked at her face and

M: Does he tell you how many records you sell?

D: My band?

M: Yeah.

D: Yeah.

M: Well, how many? Do you mind telling me?

D: It depends on the title.

M: The ten inch.

D: I can't give you an accurate figure because we get these statements every three months. I'd say its over twenty thousand.

M: Yeah? I take it you're not the biggest seller on the label, or do you not know that either?

D: I know that there's four biggest sellers on the label. Earth Crisis, Strife, Us, and Snapcase. I think Earth Crisis are the top sellers, the other three are probably tied.

M: I'm just curious, there's no other reason that I asked.

D: I don't really know all the numbers and stuff, and I probably just set Tony up for a lot of heartache from the kids that are gonna read your zine by sayin' that, but, y'know, if I was to sit down and calculate all the numbers, I don't know, I would guess something around or above twenty thousand, but I don't know.

M: So how does that make you feel?

D: It doesn't make me feel either way. I really don't care. I have my own label, and I would make records on that label if, y'know, I wasn't on Victory. I'm glad that its easy for...I'm glad to get kids from the middle of Kansas write me letters and say "hey, I got your record at a department store, and I really like it. Up until recently when Victory got this distribution deal I wasn't able to get any of this stuff, and I was never exposed to this kind of music, only kids from big cities were. And now I'm living in the middle of the country and I can go up to a big department store and I can get this type of music that I like. Just because of my geography, where I live, normally I couldn't get this, but now because of the deal that Victory has with Sony, I can." So that's a good thing y'know. And most of the people that are bitching are people who live in big cities, they can walk a block from their house and pick up any records that they want. But you gotta keep in mind that these kids who got live out in the sticks, they don't got a chance in hell of findin' nothing. Are they supposed to only listen to Guns N Roses because of the place where they live?

M: What about your label - has Dark Empire been completely replaced now?

D: Yeah, now its called Holy Terror

M: What else do you want to talk about?

D: Its up to you.

M: I don't know. Well, actually, there's another rumour for you to quash.

D: Okay, that's cool.

M: Its not as bad as that. You told me on the phone the first time we talked that you would never tour Europe again.

D: Yeah, well, I guess we are.

M: Someone told me you were, and I thought 'that can't be.

D: See, the thing is, I dont really like losing my income. That's kind of the bitch of it all, because when you get to the point where you're an old man you can't fuckin'...you can't pay your bills and be fuckin' playing shows for free for a month. I come home with nothing, and you spend all your money

going to this place and you come home penniless, y'know. But the other guys in the band are gung-ho about going, so I figured I'd try it again.

M: When is that gonna be?

D: All I'm asking for is minimum wage, its not like I'm trying to be a dick y'know. I'm not asking for fucking five million dollars or something. Minimum wage, five dollars an hour. Is that too much to ask? I could go to Burger King and make that, y'know. Its supposed to be in April, the tour.

M: And I guess you're not scheduled to come to England?

D: Actually, it says that we are.

M: Really?

D: Yeah, it says London.

M: Is that all?

D: I don't know if we're gonna be allowed in, because

D: '91 I think.

M: Well, its probably about a hundred times better now.

D: We never got to play though.

M: What were you doing then?

D: We were supposed to play, and then we ended up going to jail, and then we got deported. We got sent to Belgium.

M: Nice one!

D: And then from Belgium we took the train to Germany, and then we played some shows with Neurosis. The we played some shows with Into Another, and er...then we starved to death. We had barely anything to eat, it sucked. And at that time period I was living in a real bad neighbourhood and everything. Compared to the tour, where I lived was like living in a mansion or something, y'know.

Madness!

M: (Laughs) Well, if you do make it to England this time...

D: I'd like to. A lot of my favourite bands are from England and I'd like to get some records and stuff, check out some of the places that I didn't get to see when I was there before.

M: What, like tourist mode?

D: Yeah, basically. I mean that's kinda the main reason I do the shows, to see sights.

M: I've never been to America, but if I went I'd be more interested in just going into shops and stuff than going to 'places of interest'

D: Yeah, I would go to a couple of record stores I guess, I would try to get some stuff that would be really expensive over here because of import.

M: Do you know many people in England?

D: Yeah, I know a few people.

M: Are they around London mainly?

D: Yeah, basically in the London area. This guy named Robert Forbes...

M: I've met him once.

D: Have you? He's cool. He wrote a book about Death In June, they're a folk goth band.

M: I know that, i got you loads of records by them. So we may yet meet?

D: Yeah, maybe so. I'd like to go there. One of my favourite bands is from there, Throbbing Gristle. I think they got deported though.

M: (Laughs) Everyone gets deported!

D: They actually lived there, but I think they got kicked out of the country because of connection to a murder

M: What? Crazy!

D: Their band promoted that kind of behavior, and somebody involved in some killings, they had their logos or something around... so the story goes, but I can't say if its true or not.

M: Like the kid who shot someone with a Sick of it All shirt on.

D: Except these guys probably embrace that instead of denying it. If someone wants to kill for my band they're welcome to, and I'll give them free stuff in prison.

M: (Laughs) So what's going on with your zine?

D: We're having trouble getting it printed because of the content. Its pretty controversial stuff, all the printers are turning me down because of some of the images in there. I'll just have to figure out another way to do it.

M: Are you gonna compromise and take stuff out?

D: No, I won't do that. Its almost 6 months now because of this problem, I'm gonna have to figure out a way to do it, but I'm gonna have it done, nomatter what. Even if I end up fuckin' screen printing the damn thing. I don't know how good that'll look. I could make it look good, but I don't know how many I'll be able to make like that.

X



Photo by Lenny Dogprint

our passports say we're not.

M: Oh man! Well I ain't going to Europe, put it that way.

D: I've been to England before.

M: But not played?

D: I got put in jail at the end of the trip.

M: What, in England?

D: Yeah, in Dover I was in jail.

M: What for?

D: Err, being a guy with tattoos.

M: (Laughs)

D: For being an American with tattoos and not a lot of money in my pocket. They accused me of trying to re-locate to England.

M: Great.

D: And I'm like "hey, I'm here to play shows. I mean, I have a backpack, how much can I move in a backpack?

M: (Laughs) When was this?

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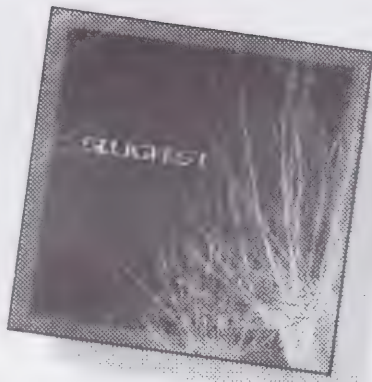


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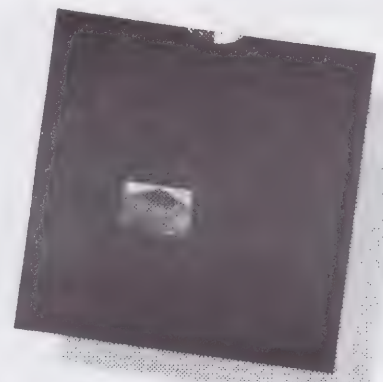
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Picture the scene: Late one night back in February 1995, me and Oliver sat

playing around on his new computer. Somewhere and somehow we found a picture of a cow on the machine's hard drive. Perhaps fate brought that cow to us. For some strange reason the Cow provided great amusement from the moment it appeared on the screen. But instantly we knew that it needed to be used for something - the cow needed a purpose. And who were we to ignore this poor creature's need?

Since we were in a comical mood, we decided that the cow simply had to be used to provide further humour. A practical joke began to form in our minds. Hey, what if we plastered the noticeboard at college with cows, wouldn't that be funny? No. However much thought a cow could provoke just sitting there gazing at all the passers-by, there must be a better use for it doing something else. Then the idea came to add text and make up a mock poster for a phoney society. 'Cow club' was born.

Hours were spent (wasted) designing a poster as

The story of Cow Club

convincing as possible for the club, and after it was done we managed to put up

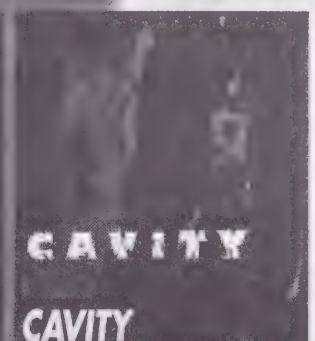
over 100 all over the campus. Poster positions were carefully selected to attract as much attention as possible. The only aim was to sucker as many people as possible to the non-existent society. Why? Who knows? Maybe the idea of being able to influence people seemed attractive. None the less, why remains a mystery, even to me. Fun was the only motive.

Well, the day of the club arrived - Friday, thirteen hundred hours. Since early morning we had been eagerly anticipating the humour that lunchtime promised. We began to wonder how many idiots would actually turn up, anywhere between 1 and 50 we thought was possible. And if lots of nice young ladies turned up, then I'm sure we would have taken charge and actually started the club for real, although I have no idea what on earth we would have done.

As it turned out, all our predictions were wrong. Nobody turned up at all. It was a complete disaster. Damn, organising chaos isn't as easy as it seems.

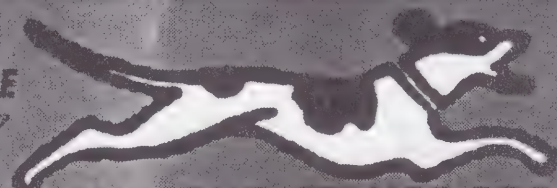


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An introduction to some German bands

Today, as I was lying on my bed busy persuading myself that I don't have a stomach ache at all, my mom came into my room, telling me that I got mail. I grabbed the letter and tore it open, wondering that I got mail from England. As it turned out it was from a guy called Marcus who I got to know by the way of computer and who I sent money to for a zine in June '96 (replied Jan '97). Actually, he gave a good excuse for the delay, and I immediately changed the label 'rip-off asshole' I gave him to 'pretty nice guy'. Although Marcus and me hardly know each other, he asked me to write an article on German bands. I've never done this before, but I thought it would be cool to help him out. So I told my stomach to shut up and started taking notes.

I live in Frankfurt am Main as known as the 'city of banks'. It's definitely a hardcore-show deserted area, so we're dragooned to drive by car into the middle of nowhere to see shows (last time we even drove into a ditch...), meet people, and play nasty 'table-soccer' matches. But the fact that there are almost no hardcore shows in Frankfurt doesn't mean that we don't have cool bands; not at all. So I decided to write my article about my 3 favourite bands from Frankfurt and 2 from somewhere else in Germany.

Let's get started with my personal faves, the emo metal band MILGRAM. To me they could be the first German band on Revelation, 'cause they're just as good as Farside or Sensefield. They really rock when they're on stage; the charisma of the whole band, their stage acting and Rene's rousing intense voice create a special atmosphere and make you step into another world. Until now they've only brought out a demo tape (with partly female backing vox) but they're working on a 7" which should be released soon. Don't miss out on their homepage! They're still working on it, but you can already have a look at their personal lyrics or listen to one of their songs called 'Icarus'.

Another great band is INSURRECTION, the first vegan straight edge black metal band. Their unique music is a mixture of mosh and grind, but what makes it really special is the black metal touch produced by the wild guitar riffs. The singing varies between aggressive and emotional parts, and their lyrics deal with topics such as equal rights, liberation, religion and of course also personal stuff. The Insurrection MCD just came out in March on Life Force records with a delay (they had to deal with the problem of how to do a 5 page inlay on 4 pages).

I guess the famous band from Frankfurt is WATER BREAKS STONE who've already toured with Metroschifter and Omaha through Germany, and might promote their 10 song CD called "Porno Christ" by touring in England and Italy (at least, that's what I've heard). It's a must to see at least one of their shows and to enjoy their impressive music; slow, melancholic parts and vocals somewhere between speaking and singing connected with intense, aggressive parts, empathised by manic backing vox. (If you get the chance to see them, take a look at their guitar player - he's the only true 'non-stop smiler'. I always wonder how its possible to smile for 45 minutes without getting face cramps or whatever...if anyone knows the answer, mail me, I really wanna know!).

Let's get to the guys with the smallest practice room ever - STALEMATE. When I got to see their room I thought it would be a storeroom, until Olaf told me that they practise there. "Don't fool me"

was what I thought, and I wouldn't believe him until he swore it! Stalemate are pure metal, although much of their music is pretty slow. It gets a real death metal touch when Christian begins to scream. Uah, scary. They've also just released their 1st 7" on Alveran records, it has to be even more evil than their demo tape.

WATER BREAKS STONE

Courtesy of Bine Harm



The last band I wanna write about is Acheborn, the Eppertshausen Crew (that's the dump where they come from). Their 7" would be worth buying just because of its excellent artwork done by their bass player, who sometimes organises cool gigs in the garage-sized photographic laboratory (or whatever it is) of his parents. They always rule. Uh, I don't know how to describe their music, its just pure aggression - evil singer, heavy guitars and partly even faster than fast.

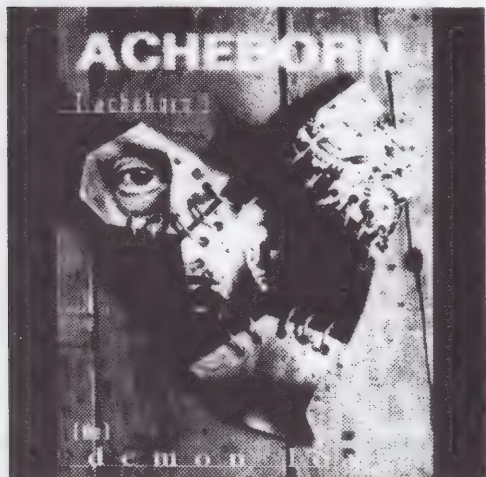
I guess that's it for now...I hope you've enjoyed it at least a little. Love,

Bine

By the way, I'd die for getting mail...

E-mail: harm@stud.uni-frankfurt.de

Regular/snail: Bine Harm, Rangenbergstr. 3, 60388 Frankfurt, Germany.



BAND CONTACTS

MILGRAM

Oliver Klein, Oranienstr. 29, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany.

Internet - <http://www.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/~oklein>.

INSURRECTION

David Schumann, Zum Pfarrturm 3, 60311 Frankfurt, Germany.

STALEMATE

Olaf Fidorra, Marienstr. 6, 56269 Marienhausen, Germany.

ACHEBORN

Andre Liegl, Hauptstr. 15, 64859 Eppertshausen, Germany.

K. Scott Ritcher

I e-mailed Scott a couple of times last year; the reason escapes me. Later I decided to flow him some questions, which he answered and sent back with great speed. Looking back, this interview could have been so much more, but I'd never interviewed anyone before, and didn't really know what to ask about. Combining this with the fact that Scott is a busy guy, and the result is a pretty bad interview, which I nearly left out. I kept it in though because there are one or two interesting bits, and also...well, I like Scott. For those of you who don't know, Scott is in Metroschifter and used to be in Sunspring, as well as being the owner of the now defunct Slamdek label and an important figure in the Louisville scene.



Photo by Chris Higdon, courtesy of Andy Rich

Hey Marcus,

Thanks for writing. Hopefully these answers will satisfy your thirst for knowledge. Enjoy...

First up, tell me about yourself. What band(s) are you in, and what bands have you been in before?

My name is Scott Ritcher. I am in a band called the Metroschifter. In the past I have been in the following bands... 1984-85: Telephone Booth. 1985: Rockhouse. 1986-88: Pink Aftershock. 1988: Cold. 1988-89: Dorian Grey. 1989: Cold Mourning. 1989-91: Slambang Vanilla. 1990: McBand. 1990: The Doodangers. 1990: The Inside of a Shoe. 1990-93: Sunspring. 1992-94: LG&E. 1994: The Telephone Man. 1994-Present: The Metroschifter capsule.

Okay, so Metroschifter- does the name really come from your worship of Claudia Schiffer?

Yes, the name is a combination of "Schiffer" and "Metropolitan" (which is the name of the agency that represents her).

Okay, forget Claudia now. Which is more important to you, music or politics? What do you think of 'Heartattack' zine?

If the "politics" were more important, I'd be running for office. Since they're not, I'm in a band. I think Heartattack is fine. I've never read any articles in it, I've just seen reviews of our records, which have always been very generous. Kent used to sell Slamdek stuff, and his reviews of Sunspring were always very nice too.

You once told me that the Sunspring 12" was (quote) 'pretty much a lost cause': What happened? Tell me the full story!

The deal was that we were putting out the same album by ourselves on CD and cassette on my label. None of us in the band had ever been on a 12" album before. Break Even Point offered to put out our album on vinyl, so we were like "okay." We knew that Endpoint and Lifetime had been short-changed by BEP so we didn't expect much out of it. The label didn't offer us any money for recording costs. So we sent them a finished album basically, just

so we could be on an album. We thought it would be neat to have 12" records, and we couldn't afford to do it ourselves. They sent us 50 copies of the record in 1993 and we haven't heard from them since. I don't have any hard feelings about that. I would hope to meet those guys when Metroschifter tours Europe this fall. We got what we wanted out of it, and I suppose they did too.

Do you feel that Sunspring were under rated, cos everyone I know who has the split 7" with Endpoint files them under Endpoint?

There were plenty of people who liked us who didn't care for Endpoint. We were good friends with Endpoint and did a lot of work with them, and that was kind of a mixed blessing sometimes. Maybe everyone you know is stupid.

Briefly tell me about the late, great Slamdek record company. Why did it end? (I guess you can plug your book if you want).

Well, I'd hate to ruin the ending. The book is called "Slamdek a to z" and is a 219-page illustrated history of the label I ran from 1986 to 1995 that launched Endpoint, Rodan, Crain, Sunspring, Jawbox, Metroschifter, and dozens of other great bands. You can get it for \$15 from Initial records.

Slamdek records are now all quite hard to find. Did you intend it to be that way, creating rare collectables?

I intended for each record to sell eight million copies so I wouldn't have time to answer your e-mail, but things didn't work out that way, and here I am. Slamdek was kind of a selective interest. People who knew about it loved it and supported it passionately. Now that the book is out and more people are finding out about it, how much it did, and that sort of stuff, those people who took part in it are able to say, "look, I have this record".

Are you a record collector?

I'm not a collector really. I do have a lot of stuff from Louisville and I try to make sure I keep at least one copy of everything good that comes out in Louisville.

What do you think of record collectors? Are they geeks?

I don't care. Everybody has their own thing to do. Some



people collect bottle caps. Are they geeks? Sure, I guess they are.

What is so great about Louisville and its HC scene? Obviously, living in the UK, I can have no idea of what its like, but I think it sounds like a great place.

Louisville is small, compared to other US cities. We've been able to accomplish a lot because we haven't had a lot of outside forces pressuring us or stereotyping us. Most of what gets done here is the result of people who love music and each other. There's so few people that everybody essentially knows each other and there's not a lot of room for competition.

Now time for some stupid questions! Which is best - Coke or Pepsi?

Coke is better. Wait a minute, was there another choice? Give me a break!

What would you say to Metallica if you met them?

Hello. I saw you play at Louisville gardens with The Cult in 1989 and you fuckin' rocked, dude.

Who's the coolest on Beverly Hills 90210?

What? People still watch that?

How essential are computers and e-mail to your life?

Like I said before, everybody has their own thing. I could live without e-mail, but I could also live without music. I could live without fingers, arms, elbows. I could even live without most of my brain. It's all just what you're used to.

Finally, I was just wondering who that is on the cover of the 'Fort Saint Metroschifter' record?

That's our friend Dave Cook. He plays bass for a great band called The Church of Astronauts. That picture was taken in May of 1993.

Now you have a space for your own little comments on anything and everything. What did you think of my questions?

Everything's fine. If anybody wants to write to me or anyone in the band they can send it to any of these addresses, which you are welcome to publish in your zine:

E-mail: kcom@cris.com

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METROSCHIFTER (Fireside Bowl, Chicago, May 1995)

L-R: Chad, Pat, Mario, Scott

Courtesy of K. Scott Ritcher



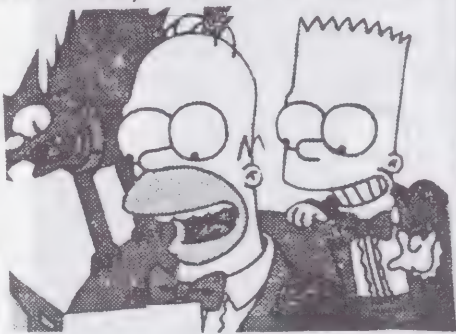
People don't live life anymore. People lead existences. Living and existing are very different, but too many people confuse the two and blur the distinction. Not me. I know the difference. But that doesn't help me from being sucked into a dreary daily existence.

Trapped. I feel trapped. I no longer have the freedom to be spontaneous. If I had lots of money I'd be free, but I don't, so I have a job. It's not by any standards a good job. It doesn't pay very highly and it isn't very rewarding, but it's a job with all the advantages any job has, i.e. a regular income and good experience. My level of responsibility is low, so I don't have many worries when I leave in the evening. At present it's fine, but it's only temporary. I've done it for 3 months, I have 3 months left.

Drained. I feel mentally and physically drained, all the time. Having a job is killing me slowly. I have no free time anymore. The few hours I get each evening before bed time just aren't enough to do all the things I want to do. I don't have time for my real life anymore. But this is when I am working a shitty job, what happens when I need a better job? More money is the motivation, but at what cost? More responsibility, more stress, more work time... is money enough? How can I put a price on my life?

Is there no end to it? I don't think so. It's no good quitting because there is no job for which I am suited. And I can't afford to not have a job. So I soldier on. Many people can live their entire life sacrificing present happiness for future gain of some sort. Why? Because that's the way our society works. Nobody lives anymore. Life should not be like a prison sentence, but it is. We're all just doing our time.

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Skateboard youngsters facing ban

BY CATHY FARRAR

LEEDS is to bring in bylaws to ban skateboarders who cause havoc in the centre of the city.

Victoria Gardens - near the art gallery and which includes the war memorial - is a popular spot for people to sit and relax or indulge in a game of outdoor chess. But more and more members of the public are complaining about the rising numbers of young skateboarders.

Pedestrians claim that in using their skateboards, the youngsters are chipping the corners of the steps around the memorial. They also say it is disrespectful to those who died in the two World Wars for youngsters to be skating around the memorial.

Mrs Edna Grindrod, 71, of Vesper Way, Kirkstall, Leeds, who has campaigned vigorously for bylaws to be introduced, is delighted that the council are to act.

"I wrote to the council myself last August to complain about the situation and they said then that they were thinking about the option of introducing bylaws and fining people.

"But I was beginning to wonder whether the idea had been scrapped," she said. "I think it's very important that we preserve the area.

"The memorial in Victoria Gardens is intended to remember those who died in battle and it is very upsetting to see it being degraded as it is at the moment," she said.

"These skateboarders whizz around the area, taking no notice of the memorial. They seem to have no respect for it at all."

A spokesman for the council said the bylaw had been approved by them in principle and was now being submitted to the Home Office.

Once approval was granted, the bylaw would come into effect.

damnation



Blind to protest at Police

Hundreds of blind people from Bradford and the rest of the North plan a major demonstration on Friday against Yorkshire's Police department.

More than 400 protesters are expected to march through Leeds with a Police escort before handing in a petition bearing at least two thousand signatures to the Council demanding action.

Campaigners say it will be the country's biggest protest march involving blind people for more than 20 years.

The event was being organised today as Police announced the introduction of a new law permitting them to shoot blind people 'at will', which they claim will make it safer for people to walk the city's streets.

From April, blind people will be declared a 'menace to society' between the hours of 9:30 am and 3pm and after 6pm on weekdays, and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

But blind campaigner Gordon Jones of Tyersal said this was totally unacceptable.

Fury erupted in January when the Council ended freedom for the blind in public areas and decided they should 'stay indoors or face the consequences.'

CHAMBERLAIN



Man ate drinking pals

A RUSSIAN has admitted killing three of his drinking partners and eating their internal organs because he could not afford to buy food. Ilshat Kuzikov, 37, was found criminally insane and sent to a maximum-security psychiatric hospital. Police in St Petersburg found the dismembered bodies of the victims and a jar with marinated human flesh.

STRIFE



HEATHEN



I remember seeing Neckbrace play and thinking to myself that the singer had a real attitude problem. Seeing him in a skate shop a few days later I had wanted to ask him about his band, but figured he wouldn't talk to me. That was Heath. A couple of years later I began talking to him at shows, and I finally discovered that he is far friendlier than his stage presence would have everyone believe. We are now friends, and I decided that it would be cool to interview him in order to find out a little more about his shady past.

Nowadays, Heath is the singer for Stampin' Ground, the British metal monster band who are about to issue their debut album into an unsuspecting world.

Marcus: *It's like you're really apprehensive and don't want to talk because you feel conscious of everything you say.*

Heathen: I'm dead nervous already. (Laughs) *Okay. I'm interested to know, first of all, how old you are and how long you have been into hardcore? A long time it seems to me.*

(Laughs) Twenty six years old, and I've been into hardcore since I were about, er, eighteen. Seventeen or eighteen.

How did you first get into it?

First through metal. I were into metal bands... Ozzy Osborne, Slayer, Metallica... you name it... Judas Priest. I was into all that, and then I just progressed from that and started getting into the UK hardcore scene at that time which was bands like Ripcord, Hellbastard, Electrohippies, and then I progressed and got into American hardcore and took a step from there. That's where I am today.

So that's what, eight years?

Yeah, something like that. I've been in various bands, seen billions of shows. I was in Neckbrace, Nailbomb, No Way Out, In Touch.

In Touch?

A band called In Touch.

What was that?

It was the first ever serious band I did, it was a straight edge band.

Did you put anything out?

No. We was gonna do something. Nick Royles was in that as well, he used to be on drums.

Oh yeah? Was he a good drummer?

Shit! (Laughs) That's why Ironside never did anything. I'd say we sounded a bit like Straight Ahead. We only did a

couple of shows, and then we formed No Way Out. Good times.

Have you got any cassettes with these bands on?

I probably have, somewhere.

But they're hidden away?

Yeah, in some vault or something so I couldn't get to 'em. You don't wanna hear 'em, believe me.

So would you say that the first successful band you were in was Nailbomb?

I'd say Neckbrace. I think Neckbrace did more than Nailbomb.

But I guess that's because your idea of success has changed.

Yeah. I think the thing was that Nailbomb changed. We started off as a hardcore band and we seemed to go too metal. I think a lot of people were put off thinking we were a cheesy metal band. And a couple of the others, Neil and Bez, got pissed off. We wanted to do some hardcore - heavier stuff, more rocky. Clutchy sort of stuff, so we formed Neckbrace. And then we got another Bassist, so we were a full vegan sXe band.

Then what happened? What happened to Neckbrace? I saw you at the lin2 festival where ... I can't remember which one it was. One of the early ones, the first one Above All played. I think it was the second ever festival.

It could've been the last Neckbrace show I ever played. Did I look pissed off?

I don't know. You said some stuff that I remember.

Did I say "fuck a lot of people"?

Yeah. I just remember you saying "if you're not sXe, you're fuckin' wea k."

That's probably because I were goin' through a lot of shit in life at that time... I think I was... I think that was the actual Neckbrace last show, at the lin2 anyway, coz we was just pissed off at the lin2.

I remember you saying on stage "this is the last time we play this shitty club" or something.

I got a lot of shit for that, they was gonna ban me from the club, which is pretty funny.

(Laughs)

I don't know, but basically the rest of the band all flaked out. They're still together, except for Bez. They got another guitarist and they're playin' like Sensefield type stuff.

Yeah?

They actually do sound like 'em. They sound ok y'know, but they're not my kind of music in particular.

Strange.

They're ok guys, I talk to 'em and that, but it'll never be the same. Neckbrace probably did the most. We played Europe

twice, we actually got out of Bradford and did some shows. We did a show in Southend with Above All, and things were going pretty well. We got a 7" out, which was supposed to be on Stormstrike records, but it all seemed to fall apart then.

I got your demo and saw you at the I in 12 festival, and then that was it. You just kind of disappeared, then you re-surfaced about a year later in Stampin' Ground. Until now I never really knew what happened.

I just got this chance to get in Stampin' Ground. Before I was in 'em, they had another singer, who sings now for a band called Medulla Nocte. He's a classic vocalist, but Stampin' Ground were very metal with his vocals, and there was some problem or something, or he wanted to do a different type of music, and they were supposed to play this festival, and Nick says to me "do you wanna try singing for them?", so I said "yeah, I'll go for it", spoke to Ian and went down and jammed. That was it, we hit it off straight away.

Is there a scarcity of vocalists in England?

Yeah, definitely.

Known ones anyway.

I don't know, there's quite a few vocalists, but its the same with good musicians. To form a band, like if I wanted to start a side project, there's nobody. That's why I've got to travel all the way down there to practice. I don't know. Its worth it just to see kids at the shows. If they get a kick out of it, I get a kick out of it. That'll do me.

Do you play guitar?

No.

I just wondered why there's a guitar over there.

Sam plays guitar. She can actually play guitar.

Quite well?

Pretty good, she can play Integrity and stuff like that.

No way!

She actually wants to do a straight edge band, but again its getting the people.

I guess that's the problem in England, there's so few people that everyone's already in a band.

Yeah, that's it. When Neckbrace split up I never thought I'd be in another band. Then this chance came up, and I was a bit weary at first because of the travelling. Also, I've had to buy a car to get down there, but its worth it, the way things are going. Its the best band I've been in, definitely. All I want to do is play shows and get some records out.

So, Stampin' Ground, definitely the best so far.

Yeah. I think its because we've got a varied taste of music. Adrian, the drummer, listens to nothing but death metal. Saying that, he does listen to Earth Crisis, Snapcase, Bloodlet, that sort of stuff. Scott's... he listens to all that, but I'd say he's a metallor.

He looks like a metallor.

Well, he's just had his head shaved, so he probably doesn't look like a metallor now. He listens to Judas Priest, Metallica, all the metal stuff. He even listens to Vixen (Laughs), which is pretty bad! Ian just listens to hardcore stuff, and punk. And Mobs, he's the same, he listens to all that stuff. Pretty varied, but it all comes together in the end. And also, with Ian being in Burnside and Decadence Within...

Are they still going?

They changed their name to Burnside, but Ian and Mobs have left now, but they're still going.



When they were in it they played different instruments didn't they?

Yeah, Mobs, who plays guitar in Stampin' Ground, used to play drums. He's an amazing drummer. But they had to give it up coz Stampin' Ground have been booked for so many shows. But with all of us having experience from being in bands before... I know the live scene...

I guess that's why you play with different styles of bands, coz of your different tastes?

Yeah. We just try to play to basically get out there. I think when you're in a band you've just got to get out there and play. If you wanna sell records or get people into you, you've gotta put the work in. I think that's why its paying off, coz we play a lot of shows and do a lot of work.

So, is your live show an advert for your record, or is your record an advert for your live show? That's a tricky one.

I was thinking about it actually. The whole thing about shows and records. I mean, referring to the music industry as a whole, its mainly the case that live shows are are a kind of advertisement for selling records, but I guess that within hardcore it should be less like that. Obviously we have to play shows to promote the record, like on tour in Europe we had to sell CDs to make our petrol money, or we wouldn't have been able to go on. Its a form of work, you're working to sell your product, that's how I see it.

I guess a better way of putting it is: Do you think you sound better live or on record?

I don't know. Probably.

Probably what?

Probably. I don't know. That's a tricky one. Erm, yeah, probably. You'll have to judge for yourself by our new album, coz I think that's gonna be more... more Stampin' Ground. The thing was with the mini CD, they wrote the songs before I joined the band. They were sung by another singer. They're good songs, but to me, that weren't me. They didn't have any of my influence, but the new songs have definitely got that. I'd say we're a good live band, y'know, because whenever we go to play shows, the lot of us put 100% in, whether there's five people or a hundred people there. We don't give a shit how many people's there, we'll always do the same thing, coz we just wanna be... we just wanna be a good band. (Laughs) Just cut out whatever you want to cut out, coz I'm waffling a bit.

It doesn't matter. That's the fun of doing it live as opposed to written. Also, some things I wanna ask might stem from things that I could never foresee you saying. Which reminds me, when we did that interview in the mail before, I asked if you had ever been in jail, and you said that at a Leeds United match once you got arrested, but what were the consequences of that?

I just got fined, about £100.

For what?

I think it was a section four or something, something to instigate a riot. Basically it was a load of shit, and I had to stand up in court in front of a judge. The police were making out I was having running battles with like five hundred football supporters, and I told the judge it wasn't true. I definitely didn't do that. I did argue with a few guys, but that was it, and I just got nicked. I got locked up for a couple of hours, basically, and that was it, I was in court about a week later.

Strange.

I still like football, I still support Leeds, and still like to see how they're doing and that. Whenever I can I'll go to a football match. Not for trouble. I used to go for trouble, but not anymore.

No way! Football hooligan!

Have you seen my tattoo? (Reveals LUFC tattoo on inside of bottom lip)

Oh my god! Did that hurt?

Definitely. It made my eyes water anyway. That was a few years ago, when I was about seventeen or something. *You should have it on your record cover!* (Laughs)

I don't know if I can be bothered to talk about this or not, coz we've been talking about it all

night. But anyway, what do you think of the UK scene at the moment, especially after touring Europe?

England's getting better. Its got some good places - it all depends where you play. We've done some good shows in Bradford, I can't deny that, but the best shows we've played are Belgium, definitely. The kids are just so much more into it over there. I don't know if I should say 'more into it', there's a lot of kids into it over here, but over there they're more up front, they'll get up there and sing your songs, stagedive, that's what its all about. Going to shows and releasing your aggression.

I kinda think the problem is England's size. If you go to a show in Bradford, everyone's just stood around. I reckon that secretly everyone wants to start a pit, but none of them want to be the first, because they're worried that people will think they're a dick. Coz its a small community it'll be gossip. "Did you see whoever throwing himself around, what a prick."

It only takes one person to start it off then a lot of other people jump in, but it seems pretty shit that just coz Strife come over or Sick of it All all these people come out and there's all diving... where the fuck is it when all the other bands are playing? All the smaller bands. Even if they only sing a few words, it keeps you keen to play. But the scene is getting better, especially London, its getting



pretty big. I think a lot of it is people are into different types of bands, people are into punk stuff, or mellow stuff... a lot of people have moved on now from what they used to like, y'know. More kids have gotta do fanzines, put on shows, go to gigs, support bands. That's what its all about.

Do you not have any problems in your mind with mainstream kids that kind of happen upon your shows. People who wear like... hmm, I'm trying to think of a band that I think is crap that you won't disagree with.

Biohazard. (Laughs)

Alright, say you get some long haired kid with a Biohazard shirt moshing away at the front. Does that not bother you in any way?

Definitely not. To be honest, I'd rather see kids like that. At least you know they're enjoying themselves and getting something out of the music. That'll do me, that's all I wanna see.

But don't you worry that some of these kids get your record and don't bother reading the lyrics? I think you've always got a problem with that. Even straight edge bands, people buy straight edge and don't read the lyrics. I know loads of people that don't give a

shit about lyrics, they just like the music. Its a bit shit when you're trying to promote vegetarianism, but at least they've bought your record. If you can change one person its better than none at all.

But are you ever gonna know about it?

Probably not, but y'know... before I turned vegetarian I used to slag vegetarians off, when I was a metallur, I were into Ozzy Osborne, and I were just like 'Fuck vegetarians' and stuff. And it only took one band and I just got into it. I think a lot of its who you hang around with as well. I ain't got a lot of friends... well, I know loads of people in Bradford, but over the years you really find out who your friends are. I could probably count 'em on one hand. *Interesting you should say that actually. Especially within hardcore, when I go to a show I talk to all these people, but when I'm not at shows I never see them.*

I think this is a problem. People don't contact or keep in touch with each other, or organise to go out or whatever. *What do people do though?*

Well, this is it.

I skate, right, and if I didn't skate I don't know what I'd do with my time. What do people do? Do they just sit around at home all day watching TV or what?

Its pretty strange. I think if I didn't have the band I would just skate all the time.

When I go to a hardcore show I feel that I don't fit in coz I'm a skater but then when I'm out skating I feel I don't fit in with the skaters coz I'm primarily a hardcore kid.

Yeah, the skate scene now, its changed so much. When I started skating at the end of 89 it was all punk music. Part of what attracted me to it was that it was different but now its more about fitting in and posing. The skate industry has really fucked up. Myself, I only support a couple of companies I think are pretty clued up, like Toy Machine and Zero. World Industries... I tend to leave shit alone like that, its just fuckin' mainstream crap. All these kids getting in to it to pose, going out drinking. One thing I hate is seeing skaters skating around with cigarettes in their hand. It just doesn't look right, y'know, its just stupid. I mean, its up to them at the end of the day if they wanna do it, but it just seems a bit of a fashion now.

Yep. (Pause) Is there any thing else you want to talk about?

How about what sort of music I like? I listen to stuff ranging from Suede and Morrissey, Elvis...

Suede? Seriously?

Suede, yeah.

I thought you were joking when you said Suede earlier.

No, I've got a Suede CD.

What, the first one?

I ain't got the new one.

Why? What attracts you to Suede?

I don't know, its just relaxing music. When you've taken so much hardcore its just a break. I think you need a break sometimes from listening to hardcore.

But you can listen to really mellow stuff within the world of hardcore that at least promotes independent and underground culture.

Yeah, I know its mainstream...

Its just Suede, I fucking hate them, because when I was at school and they first came out... I know he looks like a dick, but the music's quite good.

I used to listen to some bad stuff, stuff I consider as bad now, like Dinosaur Jr, but I knew people who liked the same stuff as me and they all loved Suede when they first appeared, and I was like "Suede, its the worst thing I've ever heard!"

(Pause) *Do you want to talk about the album?*

When's it out?

Hopefully its gonna be out at the end of next month, March, end of March. Its on We Bite. It was gonna be on Blackout!, but its probably gonna get licensed or something in America, maybe Blackout! or Caroline. Its gonna have 11 songs on, its titled... oh shit, what are we calling it? (laughs). Its either "Demons run amok" or "Anger as a way of life". There's one old song off the mini CD. And its shit heavy.

X

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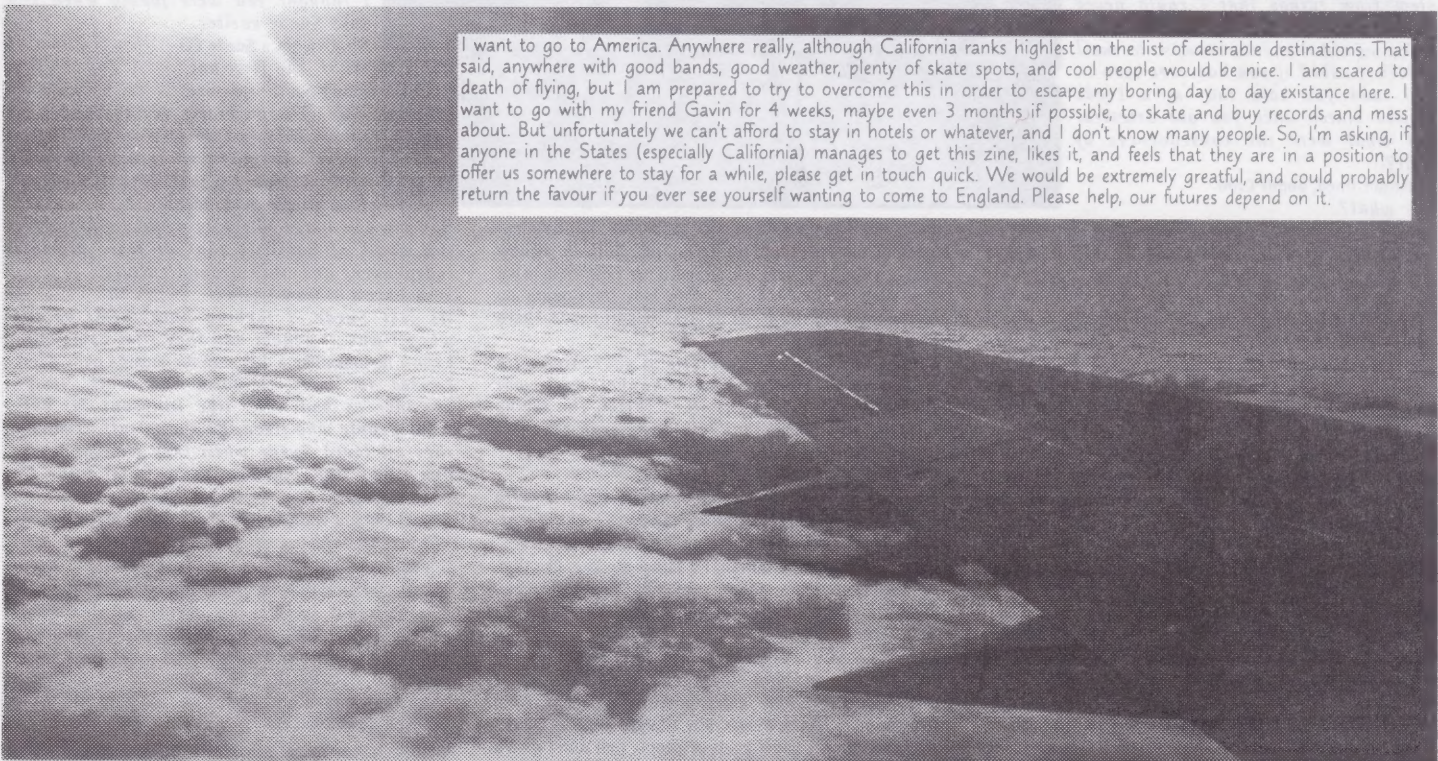
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I want to go to America. Anywhere really, although California ranks highest on the list of desirable destinations. That said, anywhere with good bands, good weather, plenty of skate spots, and cool people would be nice. I am scared to death of flying, but I am prepared to try to overcome this in order to escape my boring day to day existence here. I want to go with my friend Gavin for 4 weeks, maybe even 3 months, if possible, to skate and buy records and mess about. But unfortunately we can't afford to stay in hotels or whatever, and I don't know many people. So, I'm asking, if anyone in the States (especially California) manages to get this zine, likes it, and feels that they are in a position to offer us somewhere to stay for a while, please get in touch quick. We would be extremely grateful, and could probably return the favour if you ever see yourself wanting to come to England. Please help, our futures depend on it.



Don't be a Robot!

I am straight edge. I don't wear Xs on my hands, I don't advertise it in any way. I don't tell people unless they ask because I don't see the point. It's a personal choice, a route I have selected to follow on my own. I don't care what anyone thinks I am or am not. Straight edge is nothing more than a choice, a very personal choice, which for me represents my anger and frustration against our society and the mainstream way of life.

As far as I can remember, my desire to not fit in with other people began to form shortly after I took up skateboarding seven years ago. I recall how many people began to give us hassle simply because we rode around on skateboards. I didn't really know why this was the case at the time, but now it is obvious to me. It is simply that most people cannot understand things that are different in any way. In the small town where we grew up, me and my friends became widely recognised, and were viewed as some sort of freaks just because we did different things to everyone else our age. I soon began to realise that I had no desire whatsoever to be a part of a society full of so many shallow and thoughtless 'individuals'. I had no desire to be associated in any way with people who lived an oppressed life because they were so scared of doing something they wanted to do because it was socially unacceptable, for whatever reason. At sixteen, my friends started to go to the pub to get drunk. I couldn't understand why they suddenly wanted to do this, but now I can plainly see that they did this simply because they thought that they had reached the age where that was what they were supposed to do. I think that far too many people do things in life because they are brought up believing that life follows a set pattern, and if you don't follow it then you will fail somehow. This is so wrong, and it hurts me sometimes.

Anyway, I began to discover underground music. The more I heard, the more I wanted to hear. The voices of those who had rejected mainstream society in favour of building their own lives founded on what they truly believed proved very attractive to me.

It soon became clear to me that completely giving up alcohol was the single best way to distance myself from the society I had grown to resent. When I decided I would never drink again, I meant it, and soon realised that it was something I should have done sooner but didn't have the guts to do. When all your friends go out drinking, it's hard to not join in and stay one of the gang. In your mid to late teens, if you don't like drinking then you have to either learn to like it or get used to staying in by yourself a lot. But I, unlike most, would prefer to stay true to myself rather than do shitty things to have 'friends'. Not surprisingly, I soon lost touch with my old friends, but at least I was prepared for this. And quite soon I was making new friends, and everything was cool. For a while. Yeah, I was proud to be a straight edger.

But as we all know, times change and happiness rarely lasts. My love of hardcore and straight edge began to fade as the scene began to change. Maybe the scene evolved or progressed, I guess that depends on

your own viewpoint. In my opinion, straight edge hardcore has now reached a point where it mirrors mainstream society in many ways - it has become a 'community' where people are supposed to adopt certain values, wear certain clothes, and behave in certain ways. Rather than being merely a personal choice for the individual, straight edge has blossomed into some kind of elitist institution. An institution with rules that are getting stricter. It's getting to the point where I don't want to be a part of it anymore. I think I am happier just sitting in my room listening to records than going to shows. I have lost my will to be a part of the scene.

People will probably take what I am about to say the wrong way. Whatever. But this has to be said. Here goes - I think that the worst thing that has happened to straight edge is the rise of the vegan

movement. It's not that I have no respect for vegans - exactly the opposite. Being vegan requires huge dedication, and I will admit that I am not strong enough to give this much. Yet I have no problem with anyone that successfully adopts the vegan lifestyle. However, I cannot ignore the fact that hardcore is now some sort of competition for the overly self-righteous. And, excuse the stereotyping, but it is mostly the vegan kids who have these 'holier than thou' attitudes. I know for a fact that there are some kids who will not even speak to another who eats meat, is 'only' vegetarian, drinks alcohol, or whatever else. And these idiots, who are completely missing the point of hardcore, who are so quick to hate and cause division, are guilty of doing exactly what mainstream society does - ignoring, judging, and alienating all those who dare to be slightly different from themselves. Fortunately, where I come from there aren't many people like this at all, but the disturbing fact is surely that there are any kids like this. If you don't believe me, take a small visit to the Victory chatroom on the internet and type in joke comments about how eating meat is great, or how beer rocks, and you are guaranteed to get some kid telling you to fuck off with true passion, or threatening you (like they know where you live, duh!), or telling other kids not to talk to you. Since when was hardcore about fitting in and complying with the rules?

So what exactly is my point? Well, as surprising as it may seem, this is not about scene unity. That stuff has all been said before, and obviously nobody pays much attention anyway. I guess all I want to do is to remind people that hardcore should not be about rules. It's about freedom. There is no authority to answer to, no-one should be able to make you feel bad for daring to make your own statements. So don't ignore someone because they are different, don't succumb to peer pressure, and don't worry about voicing an opinion that you think others will not agree with. We are not all politically correct or moral perfectionists, so why should we pretend to be? Individuality is not a crime. As long as you are sincere and use a bit of intelligence, no-one can tell you you're wrong. Be yourself, don't be ashamed. Group identities are for the weak.

Don't be a Robot!

